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ENCOUNTER

JUNE 1956 VOL. VI, No. 6

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

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This Month's *ENCOUNTER* :—

A PICTURE of "This New England" is gradually taking shape. In an overcrowded country approaching the condition where the majority receive almost equal shares, there is little vivid variousness, a spreading grey of suburbs which make up in quantity of dimness for the more concentrated intense ugliness of 19th century slums. Everywhere the price paid for diffused facilities is sacrifice of quality. As Mr. D. Mack Smith pointed out last month: "The planners were wrong to think that first-class students would increase anything like proportionately" as a result of making Cambridge "half as large again."

If England resembles more and more a large slice of that mouse-trap cheese which Dr. Edith Summerskill once told us it was snobbish to differentiate from cheeses that have names attached to them, the planners are—some of them—a good deal to blame. And beyond the planners there is the lack of any effective imaginative touch in politics, with the ideas of the conservatives fading off into sheer nostalgia, the mental energies of the socialists canalised into the game of the Right versus the Left.

Universal Welfare, it is beginning to be realised, casts a long, wide shadow over green, bright fields. Yet being depressed about prosperity could easily become one of the most depressing activities of the new England.

IT IS too early to criticise the crowds who drift dully into London's West End on Saturdays and Sundays seeking such entertainment as the metropolis has to offer. Before one reproaches the over-employed and their offspring for dullness, one must give them ten or twenty years. Mr. Wayland Young, comparing George Orwell's Wigan with the Wigan of today, tells us "in the roar of the mines and the foundries and the mills, these people are inwardly resting." This seems a wise observation. It is possible for a new generation also to be resting from the efforts and catastrophes of their parents.

Yet it would be complacent to feel happy about one passage of Mr. Young's summing up: "What *are* Wiganers interested in? The place of their team in the Rugby League; the pools; the 'tele.' What are you interested in? The place of the free world versus the Communist world, the stock market, the Old Vic."

"You" presumably means "us," the reader. You might answer—"True that politics, business, art and theatre, are games to which other games may be preferred. All the same, nothing is gloomier than agreement that tastes differ. Moreover, it is arguable that great countries are sustained by civilisations —not by circuses." So the question how long Wiganers and the other English intend to go on resting is relevant. In the larger context of the world today, one doubts whether the English have so very long in which to bury their heads in sands where mirages appear on television screens. For one thing, the countryside all round us is being ruined. While footballers are dribbling, the whole landscape of South England disappears. Subtopia eventually swallows up the football fields. Another thing: if the slums of English industrial cities have receded in the 20th century, the hovels of the Far and Middle East and Africa are drawing closer to us every day, and their challenge, though indirect and complex, is just as real as was Bethnal Green to the Victorians.

Lastly, the suspended, resting, buried English values are ones which the world still needs. English civilisation measures public actions by the criteria of personal values. The personal and the public realm, although separate, are not entirely split apart in England. It cannot at all be assumed that because England has lost power it ought to lose influence. Those values that are today held in suspense, may soon count as never before. We may well be moving into a phase of history where the values of civilisation appear to all sides the only force that prevents us destroying one another. When enough H-bombs are accumulated for them to be unusable, naked civilisation that justifies its works by its values might take the place of naked power as decisive argument. It is not the increased strength of every country's defence against every other that has made things look brighter recently, but the realisation that

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there is a materially ever-improving—sensationally advancing—scientific future which might be thrown away. This material betterment is no guarantee of a better world unless other values prevent universal disillusionment with the world of shared resources.

With the H-bomb, power has become gold (or uranium) in the bank which cannot be drawn on anywhere without all the banks all over the world becoming bankrupt. This being so, power is potentially useless, though, for the time being, still a necessary investment. But in a world where power politics cancel out, other forces may turn out to be the real forces, even of politics. We may live to see the day when the last becomes the first and the first last, and when personal values, moral values, æsthetic values, may determine all futures.

NOTES ON OUR CONTRIBUTORS

WAYLAND YOUNG, who writes frequently for *The Observer*, is the co-author (with his wife Elizabeth Young) of *Old London Churches* which has just been published by Faber and Faber. . . . T. R. FYVEL has contributed articles and reviews to previous issues of ENCOUNTER. . . . CHARLES CURRAN is a Fleet Street journalist, and former assistant editor of the *Daily Mirror* and *Evening Standard*. He was also Conservative candidate for Uxbridge in the last elections. . . . JOSEPH and STEWART ALSOP are, of course, the well-known American political columnists. . . . DAN JACOBSON's novel, *Dance in the Sun*, was recently published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson. . . . MANÈS SPERBER's *The Lost Bay* was recently published by André Deutsch. A longer version of his essay was published in *Preuves*, in Paris, under the title "Misère de la Psychologie. . . ." LUIGI BARZINI, Jr. contributed the article on the Italian Aristocracy to our January issue. . . . PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR, author of *The Violins of St. Jacques*, is now writing a major work on Greece.

CONTRIBUTORS TO OUR SYMPOSIUM ON "AFTER STALIN . . ."

DWIGHT MACDONALD is a staff contributor to the *New Yorker*. He was previously an editor of *Partisan Review*, and for some years published his own magazine, *Politics*. He has nearly completed a history of the cinema in Russia since the Revolution. . . . IGNAZIO SILONE, one of the outstanding figures in European democratic socialism, is co-editor (along with Nicola Chiaromonte) of a new Italian monthly, *Tempo Presente*. . . . Vice-Admiral LESLIE C. STEVENS was Naval Attaché at the United States Embassy in Moscow in the years 1947–49. His *Life in Russia* was published in this country by Longmans, Green & Co. . . . LOUIS J. HALLE was formerly a member of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department. His book, *The Nature of Power*, was published in this country last year by Rupert Hart-Davis. . . . R. H. S. CROSSMAN is Member of Parliament (Labour) for Coventry East. . . . FRANK MORAES is editor of the *Times of India*. . . . EDWARD CRANKSHAW writes on Soviet affairs for *The Observer*.

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This New England

I. RETURN TO WIGAN PIER

SINCE George Orwell published *The Road to Wigan Pier* in 1936, Wigan has changed from barefoot malnutrition to nylon and television, from hollow idleness to flush contentment. The landscape is the same all right, but as soon as the figures come on you are clean out of Orwell-land.

Orwell is well remembered in Wigan, but ambivalently. Those older men who knew him during his six weeks' stay, trade union leaders mostly, remember him as a confusing and confused figure. One said: "He brought daffodils to my wife once—great big fellow he was—we often remember it. You know how some men are bringing flowers; they keep them hidden away under their overcoats. But not our George"—and he made a gesture like a standard-bearer. Another said: "Funny fellow. He learnt more here than he ever learnt at Eton. He asked me for bad lodgings, and by God I found them for him. I took him down the pit, you know. He was six foot three or so, and he lost consciousness three times." "Did you take him down a bad pit?" I asked. "Of course," he said, without thinking.

We went on to talk of conditions then and now. I said I found a deep contentment everywhere. "Complacency, I call it," he retorted. There was a hot coal-fire; we yawned, and the conversation ran slowly down into silence. We thought of the harsh years and the strange giant who had come to Wigan bearing daffodils and always wondering whether he had reached the bottom yet, the final squalor yet, whether he could yet claim his identity with the hungry, the barefoot, the smelly. And—or at least I wondered this—whether the turbid, incandescent, soft, yet exact book he wrote had had any part in bringing about the new order which has given Wigan its contentment, or complacency.

Of course it had. Of course all those floppy orange Left Book Club books and all the speeches and the poems and the congresses and the gaucheries and the generosities of the left-wing intellectuals of the thirties have born fruit, are now bearing fruit. That impetus was leavening away silently and hiddenly during the war years and came up again after the war clothed in the sober grey of the Welfare State. Most of the slums are cleared by committees, but some are cleared by poets.

THERE is something archetypal, almost heraldic, about Wigan. To begin with there is the legendary pier, and the fact that, of all the towns of industrial Lancashire, Wigan alone lies spread out in all its majestic black murk *below* the London to Glasgow expresses. Everybody has seen it from above. Only fifty-eight thousand people live in Wigan, but it is the market-town for a quarter of a million. On Saturday afternoons the market-place, which in Orwell's days was full of angry speakers and hungry listeners, is full of brisk buying and selling. The well-to-do people live in Wigan Lane, big old houses behind trees, but the very prosperous motor home to Southport every evening. The stallholders at the market are among the latter.

Coal is the foundation. The town is built on coal, and there are four hundred years of

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coaldust on the bit of the church that didn't get rebuilt in the 19th century. The mud is black with coal, and it gathers in the cracks between the paving stones and the setts. The three staple industries are mining, textiles, and heavy engineering. At night the express trains cross high above the town with a noise like battle.

There are no lodgings to be had in the poor quarters. Poor, of course, is the wrong word; the people there are no poorer than the others. Mean, perhaps; the quarters where the bad old houses still stand. One up, one down, plus scullery-hole. Sometimes two up, two down. The fact that there's no lodging to be had is a function of prosperity. The nearest I got to finding a room was this. I asked several shops and houses; no. No, they couldn't think of anyone. At last: "I don't know if there's a Mrs. Jump." This meant that my informant, after prolonged consideration, had decided to commit herself to divulging the name of a well-known local lodging-house keeper. I found Mrs. Jump in the end, but she said: "I'm sorry, love; the ceiling's come down." The point here is that the ceiling almost certainly hadn't come down, and that she was using the time-honoured polite refusal which had its origin in the old days when the ceiling really would have come down. It was stylised, as when we say "How do you do?" meaning nothing of the sort. Another old woman said, speaking of the landlord: "He won't even let us have our owns to live. That's mean, isn't it?"

The stubby plantations of smoking chimneys along the slum roofs is diversified now by those spindly exotics, TV aerials. The street-corner kids are straight and shiny-eyed and warmly clothed. In the bad old days one of the jokes about Wigan was the number of pawnshops, one on every corner. Now there are only three. The housing is the worst thing now. There are still left a few of those ghastly dumps of wheelless caravans among garbage which Orwell described. The Council, of course, are building for all they are worth, flinging estate after estate out among the opencast and the subsidence, but there are still nine hundred cases of overcrowding to be dealt with before a single slum house can come down. Five people in four rooms would not count as overcrowding; six probably would. By the standards of most countries to the south of us, this is a very creditable position. There is no sign of anything that you might call "contemporary" on the new estates, but the Council has recently decided to envisage blocks of up to five stories in an eventually replanned town centre. The new schools are spacious and up-to-date buildings, though not architecturally distinguished. The older people are none too keen to move out of the slums because of the higher rent in the council houses. The situation is bedevilled by the usual deadlock on estates owned by many small landlords; the landlords aren't allowed to put up the rent, so they can't afford to repair. But it would be exaggerated to picture the water pouring and the plaster falling on to the "tele" and the washer; somehow the houses are kept in tolerable condition. The house-proudness is to a southern middle-class eye something prodigious. It stops sharply, however, at the blancoed doorstep. Outside are mud and old cans. Individuals good, teamwork bad; which is odd when you think of trade union values.

In the end, I found lodgings in a street of rather large houses which had come down in the world. The bedroom was all right, but the bathroom and lavatory were unspeakably filthy. In one corner of the bathroom, under the ceiling, there had once been a lavatory cistern; the cistern had been taken away, but the rusty ballcock remained, sticking out among twisted pipes and blackened, peeling paint. The bath was black with ingrained dirt, so ingrained in fact that it did not come off in hot water, which was an advantage. There was quite often hot water, I dare say because of the concessionary coal retired miners now get. There were no door-handles; you had to carry your own about with you. No sheets, and the blankets filthy, though not verminous. The lodgers were mainly transport drivers and strolling players, but there was a great deal of keeping oneself to oneself. Altogether, it was a sight better than Orwell's pitiable "Brookers."

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AN IRON foundry when they are not casting is like the bottom of the sea, green and obscure and silent. The floor is many feet deep in the greensand from which the moulds are hollowed, and men in green clothing plod silently and heavily about it. The windows let in a green light through green dust, and gantries sometimes trail cold green castings through the middle air. Then when the casting begins the liquid iron issues like burning gold in an amazing streak from the cupola where it has been molten by coke, and faces, hands, hooks, chains, glow around it. The giant ladle that receives the molten iron, being perhaps a little wet or dirty, throws roof-high a fountain of sparks as white and tinselly as indoor fireworks. Nobody gets out of the way. The gantry takes the ladle full of incandescent liquid metal and trails it through the middle air; the roof glows fiery as it passes. Down; and it pauses over the mould to be filled: a cylinder perhaps, sunk thirty feet into the greensand. A man watches the molten iron through an instrument which contains an electric filament. By adjusting the voltage passing through this filament he can make it glow to match the iron, and then read off the temperature of the latter. But he is only doing this for the record; the foreman gives the order when to cast, and he does it by eye. When he judges the temperature is right, and he likes to cast cooler than the books say, the ladle tilts and the iron pours. You can see it's heavier than water; it goes into the mould with a silent, heavy rush and the whole foundry glows. Up through the riser, a hole left for that purpose, comes the displaced air and the gas liberated by heat from the greensand, burning blue; a cold-looking flame dancing above the infernal swirl of the iron and emitting less light. The casting takes thirty or forty seconds, and when it's over the foreman, green again in the half-light, does a little ungainly dance of triumph.

"What can go wrong?" I ask.

"Ee," he says, "anything can. I've had cranes on fire, the roof on fire, blowthroughs, getaways. . . ."

"Getaways?"

"Like if air gets caught under the iron and it all comes up again at you. Then it covers the floor, doesn't it? Then you run for it."

The hot greensand gives off a nutritious sort of smell, like frying eggplant. The next morning the casting will be cool enough to lift.

THIS summer, with bands and banners and lotteries, Wigan and some neighbouring constituencies are going to celebrate fifty years of unbroken Labour representation in Parliament. In such a rock-solid Labour community there is not much political campaigning to be done, and the characteristic form of socialist activity is the Labour Club. There are a dozen in Wigan alone, and Wigan is the recognised centre of the National Union of Labour and Socialist Clubs, which extends in one direction nearly as far as Manchester, and in the other nearly as far as Liverpool. On a Saturday night the Labour Club fills up about eight; it closes at ten. The subscription is usually four shillings a year, three for women. The people are intensely proud of their clubs, and they are still being built. The miners and engineering workers and their wives sit jammed side by side at small tables, drinking beer and smoking cigarettes. At one end of the long room is the bar, at the other is a stage where a young man in evening dress is singing very loud songs into a microphone about enduring love. The consoling Lancashire voices discuss his future engagements on the TV. Several times in the evening a draw is taken. The tickets cost threepence; you buy anything up to a dozen, and the first prize is £4. The profit goes on summer outings for the kiddies and the old folks. Sometimes in midweek a political speaker comes.

In a narrow corner by the bar, among overcoats hanging, stood a former mayor. The place, of course, was called the mayor's parlour. I asked about changes since the depression.

"Aye," he said; "the working classes have come a long way. A long way. There's not far to go now."

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"To go where?" I said. "What's the next step?"

"Peace on earth." It was as simple as that.

Later we talked about Attlee and Gaitskell and Bevan. He said: "You can put tons of red paint on a leopard, but his spots will be there all right underneath. I finished with the *Herald* the day I saw a photograph of Attlee with the Royal Family. Sometimes I wonder how many socialists there are left in the Labour Party."

Attlee's earldom is a very live topic in Wigan, and when God Save the Queen is played after the cinema, people keep right on putting on their coats and walking out, not as a gesture of conscious defiance so much as in complete indifference.

The ex-mayor wanted to write my name and address down for a future meeting, but he hadn't got his diary with him. He went over to speak to a friend and came back saying, "He hasn't got his diary either."

A DIFFERENT but equally pleasant atmosphere prevails at the Conservative Club. There is no Conservative candidate at the moment, but there will be one in time because there are always a few thousand Conservative voters, and it is nice to know exactly how many. The Conservative caucus, eight out of fifty-six, meeting before sessions of the Borough Council, have not in recent years been able to think of anything they would do differently if they were in office; local politics must be as quiet in Wigan as anywhere in the world. While I was there the Conservative agents of all the industrial north-west had their annual meeting. They worked from 11.00 to 12.15, discussing among other things the extent of an agent's duty to put himself up as nuisance value in hopeless ward elections. Then they had a drink before lunch. I saw one of the agents the next day, a bit heavy-lidded, and asked how it had gone. He said, "The fact is, my wife's a bit fed up with me, and she won't tell me what time I got home."

On social evenings at the Conservative Club they play dominoes for national savings stamps.

I don't know how all this compares with the atmosphere in Labour Party circles at Bournemouth.

IN THE manager's office at the mill there was a photograph of the whiskered founder of the firm and, hanging from a corner of his frame, a strictly horizontal pin-up girl. The manager had a huge desk and lots of telephones which he used all the time. He was extremely well dressed, and his manner was decisive, energetic, and equable. He must have been quite rich, he was set over two thousand people, and he was producing efficiently and humanely a commodity in universal daily use. To think of U and non-U in connection with him would have been not only impertinent but entirely irrelevant. He could not possibly have been either U or non-U, any more than a battleship can be first class or tourist. In towns like Wigan there is something very much nearer a one-class society than there is in the South. The richest people in Wigan, though no doubt they live very much more comfortably than the poorest, have the same voices, the same amusements, the same conviction of their own solidity. Beside these things, the mere habit of voting differently looks quite insignificant. Wigan is on the Grade C tours for theatrical companies; the only hard-cover books you can buy there are remaindered romances, and the consumer goods are all of shoddy design.

A traditional cotton-mill is a unitary organism. A thumping old steam-engine called the Prime Mover drives by belts many hundreds of machines which blend, card, spin, size, and weave the cotton. There is in Wigan the most magnificent example of these old hearts of the industrial revolution, still beating away after seventy years. It has a 90-ton flywheel, 30 feet in diameter, that is, twice the height of a very tall room. From this majestic wheel the driving belts sheer off in droves and soar criss-cross up through a cathedral-like roof. The engine house is filled with to-fro blasts of warm air caused by the movement of the gigantic piston-rods. The engine blew a cylinder-head once, clean

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through the wall of the canteen opposite. The engineman says, "I've had nine lives in here," and shows his scars. I think the sense of humour of miners and workers in heavy industry is rather like that of medical students. It is by no means a callous familiarity with death and disfigurement, but rather the only tolerable answer to the need to feel anything about them at all. Most of us are neither amused nor terrified by injury; we are simply astonished. They cannot be astonished, and so they grow this laughing pride, like an Englishman among foreigners talking about English weather.

The cotton comes out of the cards slowly in a diaphanous sheet as light as fog. Then it is gathered like water going down a plug-hole. Later, when it is spun, it becomes like fog again, but from speed of movement this time. By the time it comes to be woven, the flimsy, vaporous, rippling stuff has become something strong enough to be subjected to the uproarious bashing of the looms. If you get a couple of hundred looms in one shop there is no noise like it short of multiple pom-pom fire. The light is white from the white cotton dust and the white cloth in the making. The shuttles only just become visible at the end of each throw, like supersonic mice. The bare-armed, silly, stalwart mill-girls lip-read from each other, the young ones man-hungry, the older ones son-hungry. The men in the mill generally wear masks against the cotton dust, but the women don't. Everybody's hair is white with it. Jets of water vapour maintain the humidity because, as I was told, "Cotton's very allergic to the weather."

ON SATURDAY night to the dance-hall; 3s. 6d. entrance. Two thousand people, and a most excellent band. The band is bored by waltzes, but it's real warm in the pseudo-Afro numbers and real cool in a number from the *Threepenny Opera*. There's not room to jive, so the people remain locked in a full, lazy abandon of the flesh, making a vast slow, circular movement, like the fly-wheel of that Prime Mover. There is an occasional Negro, who reminds one of where it all comes from. The girls are very smart, plenty of off-the-shoulder, and some are "well-dressed" in the sophisticated and restrained sense. The boys are much less at home in their clothes, or even in their skins. Quite often you see two girls dancing together *faute de mieux*. No alcohol, but there's a good fug and lots of friendly shouting and screaming. Women are the only soft thing in the lives of these men.

In the street outside I saw the most terrific teddy-boy with a Tony Curtis six inches high and a pale-violet corduroy coat down to his knees with a purple velvet collar. He and his mates were shouting to each other in hoarse, histrionic voices about whether to go to the dance-hall, but I didn't see them there. Perhaps they weren't allowed in. I think they were Liverpool Irish, not Wiganers. Is there some reason to think that adolescent criminals (not that teddy-boys are necessarily criminals) are found mostly in places where the classes live side by side? It seems so in London; they haunt mixed Clapham and Hammersmith and the Edgware Road, not solid proletarian Stepney or Hackney or Bermondsey. Wigan has a phenomenally low juvenile crime rate, and perhaps this is another result of the one-class society there.

One weekday evening there was a couple in evening dress walking along the street. They attracted a good deal of attention, and I was not alone in following them to see where they went. It was the other dance-hall, 6s. entrance, and licensed. The 6s. dance-hall is the classiest place in Wigan. At the best restaurant you can pay as much as 8s. 6d. for your tea (4 p.m. to 9 p.m.) if you really put your mind to it.

ALSO on Saturday evening, a meeting at the Elim Foursquare Gospel Hall, to see a film called *Prior Claim*; a fairly repulsive title for a Saturday night. About a hundred people there, average age fifty, though it was called "Youth for Christ." There was a southern preacher, and some hymns. We sang our heads off.

I love to tell the story
Because I know 'tis true,

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It satisfies my longings
As nothing else can do.

There was some fine spontaneous part-singing, and the basses were very strong.

I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

There was a good deal more Christian evidence about the singing of these sturdy old hymns than about the film (American, in colour) which exemplified the argument from design; trapdoor spiders and so on.

AT THE Hippodrome was "The Fabulous Jane, the original of the *Daily Mirror* Strip," seXational, etc. She did indeed wear very little—I think at one moment she may have been wearing nothing at all; it was difficult to see in the mauve light—but one could not imagine anything less lascivious than her tiny prancings or her mimsy recitations: ". . . I'm thirty-four where I sit down. . . . I think you will agree that I *am* something different from the rest." The audience was full of children, and everybody clapped happily. The whole thing was in marked contrast to sex-shows in Paris or the Sahara oases, which is not surprising, but also to those in the capitals of world puritanism, Geneva and Boston, where I have seen the sexiest ever. It is a mistake to think of provincial England as puritan; puritanism, properly so described, is a high-pressure phenomenon, a heavy lid holding down hot steam, and usually carries a pretty lurid escape mechanism with it. Provincial England is low-pressure.

In any case, there was a terrific row, and the Chief Constable ordered Jane to wear more. She was furious, and said to a reporter: "I have to do a cat act. Who ever heard of a cat in a bra?" The *Wigan Observer* was good-tempered but firm. "Perhaps we are old-fashioned and stuffy, but the fact remains we like our actresses with clothes on, whether we be right or wrong. In any case, our local climate, while it makes us pigheaded, is quite unsuitable to such airy nonsense."

FURTHER quote from the *Wigan Observer,* women's column: "If I were Grace Kelly I know exactly what I would ask my prince for a wedding present. I made up my mind like a flash during the week. He could keep that snow-white mink coat reported to be his gift. I'd settle for the £2,000 kitchen I saw at a kitchen exhibition in a London store. Oh, it was a dream—and though Her Serene Highness may never know the joy of seeing her soufflé rise just as she wanted it, if she just kept the kitchen to walk into every time she felt blue, it would still be worth the money. To begin with, the colour seemed to me just right. . . ." Mark the soufflé, not tripe.

In that little passage you have Wigan, and in Wigan you have the emblem of the socialist revolution, because life there was as bad as anywhere, and is now as good as anywhere. Wigan is at the centre of the Labour tradition which emerged into unhampered control of the country from 1945 to 1950; what Wigan wanted to be, Wigan has become. (With a bit of a lag on the housing.) First, and most of the battle, it wanted to be warm and well fed. It is. It wanted pit-head baths and a foolproof health and accident insurance. It has them. It wanted subsidised transport to work and concessionary coal. It has them. It also has a juvenile crime rate among the lowest in the country, a weekly savings rate among the highest, and an unemployment rate so negligible that the M.P. does not even know if it is above or below the national average.

All right, but it doesn't have any culture, and it doesn't play football; it just watches. And what about the pigeons and the greyhounds that the miners used to keep? And the clogs and the shawls?

Well, what about them? This is not a matter for blame. If a man would rather play dominoes for national savings than go to a municipal opera you can't blame him; you can only note his preference. Of course he differs from a Milanese worker. He'd be just as bored in Milan as a Milanese would be in Wigan. Moreover, a lot of Wiganers get

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æsthetic satisfactions at their work which more literate people never get. Some of the things which are cast and forged and machined there are extremely beautiful. As for the pigeons and the greyhounds—well, he has the "tele." It may not be alive, but there's no denying it has more *human* interest than a dog. You do still see a few clogs and shawls; but come to that, what about bustles and the eighteen-inch waist? Things go, other things come.

So; what *are* Wiganers interested in?

The place of their team in the Rugby League; the pools; the "tele." What are you interested in? The place of the free world versus the Communist world, the stock market, the Old Vic.

So it's just two sets of people doing the same things but in different forms: competition, profit-and-risk, entertainment?

Of course. Two sets, or rather a gross of overlapping sets. No value judgments. And work's work wherever you go.

All right; but what is there *new* coming out of Welfare-State Wigan?

New? Good heavens, how often do you want something new? In the last decade you've had the abolition of want and of neglected disease. Isn't that enough?

But with inflation, those things may return worse than ever.

No doubt they may, and no doubt new circumstances would provoke new responses. For the moment, in the roar of the mines and the foundries and the forges and the mills, these people are inwardly resting.

Wayland Young

II. THE STONES OF HARLOW

Reflections on Subtopia

UNOBTRUSIVELY, near the back of the roof, almost every house on the estate had a television aerial. Along the concrete roadway we met a whole cavalcade of small boys on brand-new tricycles, all fair and bouncy-looking, the English working-class children of today. My companion, the Borough Engineer of a small Urban District Council in the West Country, was showing me over a new council housing estate for which he was responsible, and he was telling me about his heroic earlier period. A few years back, a huge new aircraft-engine works had been put up in the neighbourhood. Skilled employees at these works were paid wages as high as any in the Midlands, which meant that there was sometimes £20 or more, after tax, left in the weekly pay-packet. His instructions had been to have 1,500 council houses built as fast as possible just outside the small town. This had meant a daily departmental war: he had battled for scarce materials, had wangled priorities, had fought against the slovenliness of workmen who could not be dismissed because of the local labour shortage. Above all, he had fought for the authorisation of "extras." His luck had held. His contracts with local builders had been signed before the arrival of a "stop" notice from the higher authority which had queried his expenses. After which—he mentioned it with brief irony—the estate had been awarded a prize by even higher authority as one of the best in the country.

"There isn't, of course, much you can do in the way of planning with nothing but two-storey semi-detached," he said. Nevertheless, for all the standardisation, the estate in some way reflected his extra effort. The white five-roomed houses were of relatively pleasing design, and their coloured doorways had a Neo-Georgian look. They were solid houses, and one of the extras was a second lavatory in each. They were grouped on model neighbourhood principles, with winding roads leading to a green, and with space for a

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church, primary school, and shops in the centre. The tenants were nearly all very young working-class families, and, of course, it was all still raw and new. I had noticed that refuse had been put on the pavements for collection, not in proper dustbins, however, but in old boxes and buckets, and some of it had spilled across the road. "They always begin like that on estates," said the Borough Engineer. "I could force them to use proper bins with lids, but it's not worth it. Give them a little time and they'll learn." He surveyed his new domain. "Come and take a look at what they've done inside. It's worth it if you're interested. In my first ten houses I put in a kitchen dining-alcove and a big living-room. Not a family liked it. They all want a downstairs front and back, even if the rooms are poky."

He had the confident manner of modern authority as he knocked at front door after front door. It was the busy morning hour, and we startled young women with vacuum cleaners, women at the fridge or the clothesline, women with babies. The houses seemed filled with bicycles, budgerigars, perambulators, and television sets. The rooms certainly struck one as small, perhaps because they were stuffed with unsuitable furniture. Oversize three-piece suites and clumsy sideboards hit the eye. Cheap mass-produced china ornaments stood on the chimney-piece or in the front window: haphazard coloured reproductions hung on the walls. The effect was uniformly ugly. In all the rooms I did not see one single piece of furniture or decoration of even moderately good taste. "I may have the wrong ideas," the Borough Engineer said, "but when I think of my grandparents' cottage in Wales and compare it with these places, I don't think there is such a thing as progress. Will you be going to Wales? Well, Cardiff will do—in Cardiff, go to the Folk Museum at St. Fagan's. They have old Welsh houses in the grounds. Look at the furniture inside them. It's a lesson in what we could do in small houses."

A week later, at St. Fagan's in Cardiff, I walked dutifully through the park. A number of 17th century Welsh farmhouses and cottages have been moved there and rebuilt for exhibition. In this background they looked a little like sugar-cake creations. And they were not easy to view: it was a heatwave day, and visitors in crowds were filing through; but I could see what the Borough Engineer meant. Here was the harmonious relationship of a fireplace in its recess to polished trestle table, benches, and stools. Dresser and tallboy, ironwork and polished brass and pewter, all fitted together. The effect was a way of living where people still had genuine feelings about the design of everyday objects. The contrast between Welsh 17th century craftsmanship and the shoddy three-piece suites on the council estate was striking and depressing.

During the next few days I found myself thinking about my conversation with the Borough Engineer. He seemed a typical creative figure of the age, because behind his attitude lay a touch of sardonic contempt—for his workmen who produced shoddy results, for the various public authorities which forced him to cheesepare on construction, for the working-class families turning into an acquisitive society on the H.P., for fashionable writers who claimed that all he ever constructed was another slice of Subtopia. He was playing an important rôle in a social revolution, and his mixed feelings reflected the ambiguous nature of all revolutions.

THIS social revolution is not yet easy to define although its testimonials are springing up all around us in the new suburbia. Its mark is a new phenomenon which I think is best called "mass participation." The statistics are impressive already. At the present rate, by 1958 one family in four or five will live in a post-war house or apartment, one in three will have a car, more than half will have television sets. Today the *News of the World* and the *Radio Times* reach the majority of British households. The *Daily Mirror* reaches not much less than one British household in three, and so, taken together, do such weeklies as *Woman* and *Woman's Own*. Just about half the households are customers of the three largest Pools

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firms. The average audience of the BBC serial "The Archers" is around a quarter of the adult population. Television audiences for peak shows will probably soon be larger.

These figures illustrate social trends in Britain which are still very new, and which can best be seen, not in the town centres, but in suburbia. And suburbia in England has grown strikingly large. Since 1945 Local Authorities have built over two million dwellings, mostly on housing estates—standardised and endless small, semi-detached houses with gardens. The result is a new English townscape which is something neither town nor country, and has been savagely baptised "Subtopia" by its critics. In his famous "Outrage" article in the *Architectural Review*, Mr. Ian Nairn defined Subtopia as "visually speaking, the universalisation and idealisation of our town fringes and philosophically, the idealisation of the Little Man who lives there." Both the real and ideal appalled Mr. Nairn. And it was interesting to note from the widespread reaction to his article how many people shared his view. For example, Mr. Furneaux Jordan, reviewing the article, condemned current building and planning in even stronger terms:

> *Outrage* deals with the destruction of England by the slow, sure, inexorable tide of slime that creeps over its fields, lanes, and villages. Jerry-built estates, municipal housing, ribbon development, "dispersed industry," arterial roads, electric pylons, chain stores, road signs, concrete lamp-standards, derelict camps, army stores, pretentious hoardings, poles, huts, Coca Cola booths, lopped and mutilated trees are its theme —not to mention the good intentions: geranium baskets on lavatories and on lamp-posts, rustic gardens, misplaced planting, bedding-out, and municipal whimsy in general.

These are strong words. Perhaps they are even a little unjust. As a non-expert I would say that English private building in the inter-war years which produced the styles that Osbert Lancaster has named "By-pass Variegated" and "Stockbroker Tudor" was, for sheer philistinism, unequalled. Whatever its defects, current municipal housing represents at least some improvement. Still, I can see why to many critics the present growth of Subtopia may seem worse. After all, no one pretended that the tastes of the speculative builders of the thirties were anything but horrible. But behind the municipal housing and factory estates of today there lies so much earnest planning, design, architectural discussion, public subsidy—and the best of will. Yet the outcome is a peculiarly depressing kind of monotony.

So what is to be done? Mr. Nairn has a vision of future English cities which shall be truly urbane: compact, grouped round centres of learning and art, rather like the European city republics, and surrounded by genuine unspoilt country. In a modern industrial state like England this looks like a remote vision. But Mr. Nairn makes an irrefutable point when he says that we must today learn to plan for æsthetic ends collectively, as the 18th century did individually. And as one of the first steps he suggests that corporate planning should be removed from the local government level, where it is inevitably turned into just another unrewarding office job.

AT THIS point arises the fundamental question: *Who is to do this planning, and for whom?* (I have a fancy that my Borough Engineer would straightaway pounce on this as the decisive point.) Every society has a ruling class which usually sets the fashion in architecture as in other things. But exactly where shall we look for such a class today? I was brought up sharply against this question during a recent visit to a Lancashire industrial town which buzzed with full employment. The town centre of this minor conurbation—let it be nameless—was not bombed badly enough for reconstruction, and so has remained a shabby 19th century centre, with mean alleys running off traffic-choked thoroughfares. And like this it will remain, a local friend told me, for who today was interested in providing a more worthy town centre? The engineering and chemical factories working round the clock were branch works of great firms with head offices in the South. Dominating the shopping

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streets were the branches of national multiple-store firms, with their headquarters likewise remote. The best-paid workers were moving out steadily into surburban estates. And, in any case, everything today emanated from London, and could I see Whitehall spending money on rebuilding anything merely because it was ugly?

I felt the same absence of a class to set new housing standards when visiting the New Town of Harlow. When one first encounters this showpiece of the planners on a quiet stretch of the London-to-Cambridge road it looks quite striking and impressive. The first building seen is an imposing secondary school, all glass and functionalism, standing in spacious grounds. The factory area is full of newness and bright colours, like an exhibition ground. Streets of small houses curve into each other, shopping arcades are purposefully designed, and everything is brand-new. Different firms of architects responsible for individual sections have provided variety within standardisation. It is only when one has driven for some time along the vistas of two-storey semi-detached and terrace houses that the effect of monotony sets in, and one realises that there is a utilitarian skimpiness about most of the houses and that something is badly missing in Harlow: any buildings of real distinction. That is, any building of which it could be said that in its stones the designer had struggled to express something beyond the values of suburban living.

I think this is a significant gap. In the first post-war flush of planning, great things were expected of the New Towns. Mr. Frederick Gibberd, who drew up the master plan for Harlow, even committed himself in print to the proposition that "it is the quality of urbanity which one senses in such towns as Edinburgh, Bath, Oxford, or Florence which we must capture in each New Town we are building." If there is plainly going to be nothing of the sort, who is to blame? The answer is, no one in particular. For the question must really be turned round: who would *want* architectural boldness or distinction in Harlow? Not the tenants: they are working-class families who have moved with their factories from the wilderness of North London, and on the democratic principle that they can pick what they wanted, they have opted overwhelmingly for semi-detached villas with little sheds, garages, back fences, and the rest. Certainly not the finance committee of the Development Corporation, caught between the need to keep down rents and inflationary building costs. Certainly not the Treasury, charged with cutting down public expenditure. There remain the social and architectural planners of Harlow—*they*, certainly, had originally put forward a bolder and more dynamic master plan for Harlow in which tall apartment towers and a striking skyline were to play their part: but without support from some powerful social clan or institution such hopes had to remain unrealised.

THIS is the point which I think the impassioned critics of current English architecture so often miss. Subtopianism in architecture does not stand alone. Mr. Nairn is angry because he can start out from a landmarkless suburb in Southampton and arrive at an identical suburb in Carlisle—but in each suburb he could also find people watching the identical television parlour-game. And the *malaise* felt by English architects has its counterparts in other professions. There are plenty of intelligent people today earning their living in British films, in popular radio and television, or on large-circulation magazines who feel as violently about the work they must do as does Mr. Furneaux Jordan about the Subtopian landscape of jerry-built estates, advertising hoardings, and municipal rustic.

From the viewpoint of anyone engaged in creative work, there is indeed something odd about British life of the last few years. There is plenty of loose money about, and there are today far more people who have been educated to appreciate the arts. Yet, over the country, 120 theatres have in recent years been closed, and only one theatre has been opened. Indeed, given present costs and lack of public support, the idea of building a new

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theatre would seem as unpromising as could be.

Again, the British national market does not seem able, except in rare instances, to repay the costs of a seriously artistic film. With all the present prosperity, the nation provides only 4d. a year per head of population for the preservation of the arts: 3d. from the Government through the Arts Council, and 1d. through local authorities: and nowhere has there been any public outcry to increase this sum. Music probably flourishes best. The musical public is patently much larger than a generation ago. Yet even here all is not well. It remains extraordinarily difficult to induce enough people to spend the equivalent of two 20-packets of cigarettes on a concert ticket, and in the last year or two several municipalities have cut their subsidies to local orchestras. While culture languishes, sub-culture, or let's call it Subtopian culture, flourishes merrily, bringing to its public ever more inflated journalese, louder radio crooners, lower-plunging necklines on the 17-inch screen, even bigger Treble Chance Pools and lusher magazine fiction printed as adjunct to brassière ads.

The monotonous look of the new suburbia and the mechanical content of the new popular culture are parts of the same phenomenon —one might simply call it the development of the Subtopian outlook. Its causes do not lie, as Conservatives often say, in the Welfare State and the levelling effects of the Socialist government. The creed of American capitalism, that every American *shall* become a consumer of homes, cars, TV sets, and the rest, and the British Socialist ideal that every citizen *shall* enjoy a fair share of the national income, lead to not dissimilar ends. No, the causes of Subtopia lie in a social change more far-reaching than the establishment of the Welfare State—in something like a change of ruling class.

It is ruling classes which set cultural patterns, and for more than a century the dominant culture of Western Europe has clearly been that of the well-to-do middle class, the *haute bourgeoisie*. It was a culture which went with those great English social inventions, the gentleman's club (and the soft club chair), amateur sport, and the long weekend; with French *cuisine* and Finishing Schools, German scientific *Tuechtigkeit* and German music, Italian and Viennese opera; it went with family holidays in Scotland and Switzerland and on the Riviera; with large *appartements*, parlourmaids, and the solid house façades of Europe's middle-class cities. It went also with the distinguished European repertory theatre, the great tradition of the European novel (whose last representative was probably Thomas Mann), with liberal individualism, introspection in art, psychoanalysis — anyone thinking aloud could enumerate a similar list for himself. In all its aspects—and this was important—this bourgeois way of life was also a minority culture from which the lower-class majority of the population was by and large excluded.

It is this bourgeois minority culture with its exclusive appeal that has been crumbling. The process has gone further in the United States than in Britain, and further in Britain than in tenaciously bourgeois countries like France or Germany. What we are now entering instead is a social era based on mass participation. The keynote is that culture is no longer for a minority. Everyone must now participate.

THE change appears particularly revolutionary in a country like Britain where differences of social class have been so striking. A generation ago, the English suburban house—and garden—still belonged largely to a middle-class way of life beyond the reach of the mass of the workers. Today the whole nation feels entitled to this privilege: hence you have the sprawling suburban housing estates. Modern technique can provide every man with drama, so you have Hollywood and television. Music is demanded by everyone, and so you have commercial jazz and radio crooners. Everybody today wants holiday travel and motoring: the result is ribbon building along arterial roads, and the boom in motor-coach trips and standardised holiday camps. The financial interests which cater for these new national

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demands operate on a basis of high costs, and competition in them is intense. Hence mass participation has been accompanied by a phenomenal development in advertising.

All this is not altogether new. What is new, I think, is that in Britain during the post-war years the trend to mass participation has been sharply accelerated, and as a result the shadowy outline of a new society, which is markedly no longer the old bourgeois society, can already be discerned. On one side you have the rather undifferentiated mass of citizens as mere consumers of ready-made products and entertainments. On the other side you have large public and private bodies which supply and stimulate the citizens' wants: the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Health, the BBC and the Contractors of Independent Television, together with the multiple stores, the film and newspaper companies, the big advertising agencies, and so on.

These bodies, which all tend to be vast and impersonal, and on the other side the mass citizens as consumers, seem together to constitute a society which can apparently go on without an *élite*. So far as power goes, the bureaucracy of the new ruling institutions has to some extent taken the place of the old bourgeoisie, but culturally it lacks the independence and confidence to become a new *élite*. Furthermore, the mechanics of the mass participation society seem in a rather depressing way weighted against culture, since decisions on how much should be spent on the arts must ultimately be taken by groups of men in remote board-rooms where narrow financial criteria are in the end decisive. Many of the big industrial cities are today prosperous as never before. Is there a chance that they will raise their subsidies to municipally supported orchestras or theatres? The answer is that any such subsidy would come out of the rates, and municipalities are even now curtailing their expenditure to meet the current higher interest rates. And so British culture — to use that unsatisfactory word again—languishes (with a public subsidy) while the nation is engaged on an incessant spending spree.

SO WHAT is to be done?

It has become fashionable to argue that in an egalitarian society the highest cultural values must go by the board: at best you reach the pleasant utilitarianism of Harlow and at worst you descend to the fakery of the floodlit poster-hoarding with rock garden, and the *bonhomie* of the television compère or Woman's Page chatter. But surely one cannot as yet take this as proved. Does mass participation in modern life in fact mean that cultural standards *must* be lowered to a lowest common multiple of taste? This question lies implicit behind the onslaught against the planning of modern England. I think it is also the question behind the complaint that the new English life provides no clearly shaped material for novelists. Or again, it is the question raised by Mr. Kenneth Tynan's comments on the level of the English commercial theatre.

It is not surprising that a strong reaction against the new social trend should have set in at the ivory tower level. A look or two at the age of participation appears to have called forth a new attitude among the *literati*: a striking move back to the coterie, titles, Eton, and anti-Americanism, and a defiant indifference to the age of the common man as something at best to be deplored. The attitude is understandable but sterile. One fact seems plain. England is a seventy-per-cent working-class country; and for the majority of people who enjoy them for the first time, acquisitions like the council house, refrigerators, and television, the little car and the cheap fashion magazine, the first tour abroad and the new secondary modern schools, have opened the way to a wider, varied life previously out of reach—and they *like* it! Whether it leads to Subtopia or not, the rush to mass participation is thus irresistible. The only way to effect the evolution of Subtopia lies through acceptance of this social revolution.

This is the starting-point—there is no other; but even with this firm starting-point there is no purpose in disguising the practical difficulties of making headway against Subtopia. In the new English society of today

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there is not yet any cohesive group of people, no class, in a position either to affect majority tastes or to put pressure on the huge impersonal organisations which cater to mass demands. Moreover, the age of mass participation has come so swiftly upon us that no system of cultural values for it has yet emerged—that is, none based on a realistic acceptance of the great social change. So here lies a task for a new Morris or Ruskin. And this brings me back to the figure of the Borough Engineer whom I met on that raw, new Council estate in the West Country. There in my mind he stands as I remember him, a man of energy, judgment, and imagination—and painfully limited opportunities. He is a key figure of the age, and his attitude is central to the whole problem of Subtopia. I think the suggestion is absurd that planning should be taken away from him; to be vested in — yes, what remote official authority? On the contrary, the need is surely to give a man like him new aims to follow while achieving a better appreciation of his work. "We must learn to plan collectively, as the 18th century did, individually," says Mr. Nairn. Certainly, as long as it is understood that the phrase provides no policy, but only a starting-point for thinking about one.

T. R. Fyvel

III. THE PASSING OF THE TRIBUNES

AN ERA is coming to an end in the political history of Great Britain. It can be called the era of the demagogue—I use the word in its ancient and neutral sense as meaning the tribune of The People, the leader of the masses against the classes. For more than a hundred and twenty years, ever since the forces of social change began to disturb the peace after Waterloo, the demagogue has moulded the pattern of British politics; throughout the greater part of this period he has dominated it. Now his day draws to its close.

So far as anyone knows, not one demagogue cast in the classic mould has been born in this country since 1900. Mr. Aneurin Bevan is the last survivor of the species—and he will be sixty next year. He is a political dinosaur, a Parliamentary Stonehenge, the final flourish of a great tradition that has endowed British politics with a crowded portrait gallery of famous faces—Lloyd George, Keir Hardie, Gladstone, Cobden, Bright among them. It is Mr. Bevan's misfortune to have arrived at least a decade too late. He has brought his talent to market only as the stalls are shutting and the customers disperse; a posthumous Victorian, he is the Fanny by gaslight of contemporary politics. (But his is a genuine talent nevertheless, and he has earned his wall-space in the portrait gallery.)

The demagogue era can be dated with precision. It began on July 5th, 1828. Its birthplace was the main square of Ennis, an Irish country town in County Clare. Its founding father was Daniel O'Connell. Its birthday was polling day in a Parliamentary election. O'Connell, a Roman Catholic, was standing in opposition to a landlord candidate, the nominee of the Duke of Wellington, the Prime Minister who barred the House of Commons to Roman Catholics. Against Wellington's veto, O'Connell deployed the power of the crowd. The clash came when the landlord marched his tenants to the hustings in Ennis and ordered them to vote publicly for him under the threat that if they disobeyed they would be served at once with eviction notices. They faltered. Then a voice cried, "We'll vote for Dan, and we'll damn the consequences"; and the tenants moved forward like an army to elect O'Connell.

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For governing-class Britain it was as though Wellington's squares had given way at Waterloo. For all the enemies of the governing class it was a revelation. O'Connell's methods—the technique of agitation based on monster meetings, torchlight processions, a swarm of orators and organisers paid from the funds raised by levying a poll-tax on every sympathiser, an incessant clamour carefully orchestrated by the master demagogue so as to set the multitude in motion, then keep it swaying—were carefully studied in Great Britain. Middle-class politicians adopted several of them in order to carry the Reform Bill of 1832, which swept away the feudal House of Commons.

But it was not until a decade later that the O'Connell technique was fully refined and adapted for use in British politics. This was done by Richard Cobden and John Bright, the demagogues of genius who created the Anti-Corn Law League. They standardised the technique in a form that has lasted ever since. Two achievements by these pioneers must be noted.

They were the first men to mobilise the British masses for the purpose of making a revolutionary change by Act of Parliament. By ending the Corn Laws and removing protection from agriculture they destroyed the landed basis on which the British aristocracy had stood since the 16th century; they transferred the fulcrum of power from the farm to the factory.

Secondly, they added a revolutionary new skill to the Parliamentary demagogue's trade. For Cobden and Bright were the first to discover how an economic issue can be successfully presented to the British people in non-economic terms. They did it by lifting the issue of free imports on to a moral plane, putting it in a context of righteous indignation, wrapping it in a warm coat of sentiment, religiosity, and humbug, displaying it not as a reasoned choice between economic alternatives but as a battle between good and evil.

They brought evangelism into economics. They fought not for free imports but for the overthrow of Wickedness. (Bright's election victory at Durham City, the Marquis of Londonderry's pocket borough, may be cited in illustration; it is still a *locus classicus* for the student.) Their virtuosity stood unrivalled for fifty years until William Jennings Bryan matched it, in the American Presidential election of 1896, by the superb feat of advocating bi-metallism as a holy war against "the cross of gold."

The War on Wickedness

THE Cobden-and-Bright discovery was to have consequences in British politics that were certainly not contemplated by the Liberal industrialists who used it to destroy the Corn Laws in 1846. Before the century was out they were to find that they had released a genie from a bottle. But for several decades they employed the genie as their election agent. The history of the Liberal Party from 1846 down to its final election victory in December 1910 is one long repetition of the Cobden-and-Bright formula—a perpetual process of setting the crowd in motion, like a living battering-ram, against Wickedness. During that period it found two more demagogues of genius in Gladstone and Lloyd George.

The Liberal demagogues preferred those aspects of Wickedness that could be challenged without endangering capitalist industrialism. There were many: the limitations on the franchise, the denial of Irish self-government, the veto of the House of Lords, the power of the Established Church, the occupational misbehaviour of landowners, dukes, rectors, and brewers, everything that could be labelled either Privilege or Tradition. Not until its life was nearly over did the Liberal Party return to its first love of evangelist economics, and demand the redistribution of wealth in the Lloyd George People's Budget. But by then it was too late.

For the British masses became less and less willing to remain a battering-ram in the hands of the Liberal demagogue. From the 1880's onwards Socialism offered them a creed on which they could found a demagogy

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of their own, with a party of their own. This was the new version of evangelist economics, and it had demagogic possibilities more glittering than anything Cobden and Bright had ever dreamed of. It demanded not free imports but the transfer of wealth from the rich to the State, the creation of a proletarian paradise with full employment and universal social services financed out of redistributive taxation. (Mr. Bevan established his right to a seat in the demagogues' Valhalla when he proclaimed "Redistribution is retribution." It was evangelist economics in a nutshell, and John Bright's ghost must have lifted his hand in salute at the words.)

The years 1885 to 1945 were the golden age of British demagogy. It became a career like law or medicine or the hawking of fish. It had its own caste-marks; the wide mouth, the exophthalmic stare, the disordered collar, the carefully ill-kept clothes. It had its own vocabulary; a demotic patois in which men were always toilers and women drudges and children hungry little kiddies, in which roofs and boots alike were always leaking and the workhouse waited for the disinherited as they trudged to the end of life's rocky road.

The neophyte demagogue served his apprenticeship on the soapbox and the strike committee, then became a salaried journeyman employed by a trade union or a Socialist society like the Independent Labour Party, with a seat in Parliament as the reward for long service. Payment was by results; a hard-working demagogue, receiving a fee and his expenses for each meeting he addressed, found that his earnings were geared to his eloquence. Great names stud this period: Keir Hardie, John Burns, Ben Tillett, Jim Larkin, Victor Grayson, Ramsay Macdonald, Philip Snowden, A. J. Cook, Jimmy Maxton, David Kirkwood, George Lansbury, Ernest Bevin, J. H. Thomas, Arthur Henderson, Bob Smillie. . . .

The end of the era can be dated with as much precision as its beginning. The last gasp was heard on July 3rd, 1945—one hundred and twenty-seven years, almost to the hour, after the birth pangs at Ennis. On that summer evening the Tory party concluded its general election campaign with an open-air meeting at Walthamstow Greyhound Stadium, in the East End of London. There, before an audience of 27,000 people (the writer was in the chair), Winston Churchill made his eve-of-poll speech—and was booed down by organised squads of Socialist hecklers.

On that evening the great pool of grievances, real and imaginary, on which demagogues had drawn for more than a century was agitated for the last time. The boos were a valedictory. The crowd was bidding farewell to politics. The six years of Socialist Government that followed the boos have made the demagogue as obsolete as the hansom cab.

Welfare State Hush

NOTHING fails like success. Every one of the social problems that together created the era of the demagogue has been settled or is in process of being settled. Full employment in a Welfare State, with universal social services financed by taxation, means the end of mass-movement politics. The raw materials from which evangelist economics derived its dynamism and its dynamite have been exhausted. There is no grievance left with enough emotional content to set the multitude in motion.

Substantially, Britain's domestic politics have been reduced to the single question: How can we have full employment without inflation? To that there is only one answer: By increasing the rate of production so as to keep it in front of purchasing-power. But you cannot make a crusade out of the question or of the answer. Nor is there any scope for evangelist economics in the subsidiary question: How do you get the workers to work under full employment? For to that, too, there is only one answer: By stimulating the desire for more and more consumer goods and services. And all the virtuosi of the demagogic era lumped together, from Bright to Bevan, could not import any moral fervour into that.

The demagogues have been supplanted by the managers. Which party, Left or Right,

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is better able to manage the Welfare State, to stimulate production and regulate purchasing power? The British electorate looks like debating that question at the polls for the rest of the century. It is a question not of principles but of portfolios.

The fall in the political temperature is likely to be accentuated, also, by the rise in the age-level of the electorate. Britain is becoming more and more the land of the middle-aged and the elderly. By 1980 the pensions lobby, if it is sufficiently well organised, may hold the balance in a great many constituencies. It will demand not only bigger payments but a bigger slice of the national income to be devoted to geriatrics. The class line of fracture may be replaced—there are some signs of it already—by a split between the generations; producers versus pensioners, with education and family allowances ranged against hospitals and retirement homes.

But none of these possibilities offers much scope to the demagogue. (Still less, of course, does the more distant prospect that atomic power may terminate completely all the pressures of scarcity, and enable us to say goodbye to economics. The politics of distribution may one day follow the religious wars into the dustbin.)

Our politics now, in fact, show several signs of reverting to the 18th century pattern —when no questions of principle separated Whig from Tory; where each was concerned with administration rather than fundamental alteration; where the dividing line was drawn by reference to over-and-done-with disputes; where the bonds uniting the ruling class were far stronger than the forces of fission.

It is not entirely fanciful to detect one modern parallel to the 18th century in the re-emergence of the Parliamentary boroughmonger. In the present House of Commons, no fewer than 117 of the 277 Socialist M.P.s are the paid retainers of trade unions and Co-operative societies, provided both with salaries and with election expenses. These sponsored M.P.s—I wish to avoid a dyslogistic description—are remarkably similar, in some respects, to their predecessors who were sent there by peers and nabobs with seats to give away. The profits of the Co-op tea plantations in Asia, for instance, help to maintain a squad of docile M.P.s in the Parliaments of Queen Elizabeth II very much as did the profits of the East India Company shareholders in the Parliaments of George III. The Co-op house in Leman Street, east of Aldgate, is as powerful at Westminster now as India House in Leadenhall Street, west of Aldgate, used to be. The principal difference is that the Co-op has not, as yet, equipped itself with chatelaines from Debrett.

The A-Political Man

THERE are several ways of measuring the fall in the political temperature of Britain in the 1950's. The public meeting has all but died out. The crowded halls that studded the demagogue's path throughout his era now stand empty. (Whenever John Bright addressed his constituents in Birmingham Town Hall a hundred years ago all the chairs were taken out, so that 5,000 people could stand shoulder to shoulder and listen to him; they were packed so tightly that it was impossible for anyone to raise his hand.)

But the most striking index is the boom in television—the most significant social event of the decade. More than one-third of all the households in this country now have TV. The fascination of this toy, and the fascination exercised by the persons who appear on it, are revolutionary facts. They are altering all the domestic habits of the common man (for the television set, unlike any previous consumer luxury, has started in the mass market, instead of descending to it gradually from the higher income levels).

The preoccupation with TV has led to a fall both in cinema attendances and in the consumption of drink in public-houses. It appears to be the reason for the sudden halt, during the last six months of 1955, of the expansion in the sales of mass-circulation newspapers and periodicals, and for the startling declines suffered by some of them. It has undoubtedly helped to shift the attention of millions of households completely away from politics.

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There are many TV personalities who command far more public interest than any politician in any party, with the exception of Sir Winston Churchill. And not even Sir Winston could get a TV audience to listen to a two-hour speech, as a great many politicians could do with a public audience in any city a generation ago. So far as politics penetrate TV at all, it is usually in the form of brief, brisk bouts of back-chat between personalities, and often ending there.

The television public, like the tabloid newspaper public (the two overlap to a considerable extent) is markedly a-political. It grumbles about inflation; but it prefers, so far as it can, to withdraw from external realities into a private universe of fantasy. The tabloids offer it an escape from perplexities into a dream world of pictures, personalia, and comic strips; it is cosy, cheerful.

Between them the tabloids, TV, and the football pool coupon offering a dream fortune, make up the Welfare State equivalent of the medieval monastery. As men and women retreated to the cloister all over Western Europe when the Roman Empire was dissolving into barbarism, so the British mass-public now takes refuge in an imaginary world of cosiness, cheerfulness, concupiscence, and luxury. It asks of its politicians no more than that they shall manage matters so that it shall not be disturbed.

The New Managers

SIDE by side with this increasing growth of the a-political public, another process is going on. The great extension of State-aided education since the Butler Act of 1944 is siphoning off children of superior intelligence and outstanding personality from the working class. A generation ago, children of this kind tended to be absorbed by trade unionism and the Socialist movement. Now they move up easily, through grammar schools and universities, into the administrative and executive levels. They provide the managers for the Welfare State, both in the nationalised industries and in capitalist enterprises.

The effects are already apparent among the men who have risen to leadership in the trade unions since 1945. They show (with some exceptions) a sharp decline, both in personality and in capacity, when contrasted with their predecessors in the period 1885–1945. This decline partly explains their failure to convey to their members the economic implications of full employment. The tendency is unlikely to be corrected so long as trade unions, like Co-operative societies, refuse to pay competitive salaries for superior intelligence. In the past this refusal did not matter, since superior intelligence in the working class found it difficult to escape from that class. Today escape is easy. Also, the evaporation of evangelism from the Socialist movement means that it cannot any longer offer the sense of dedication to an ideal that once persuaded a great many people to work for it.

Britain, in fact, is now very close to the point where it will be true to say that there is a general correlation between social status and mental ability. The a-political masses will choose their managers at successive elections, and leave administration to them. A stable society with a high minimum level of economic security, plus ample opportunity for individual advancement, does not generate the tensions that produce explosive politics. The era of the demagogue is over, because the conditions that created him have gone.

Charles Curran

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Dan Jacobson

Africa, Whose Africa?

Some Recollections of a Festival

IN THE middle of the arena there was a row of men facing a row of women. The men wore short skirts of fur around their loins, bands of fur around their foreheads, necklaces of pods hanging down their chests, and anklets of the same pods around their feet, and each carried a shield of hide in his right hand and a short hardwood *kierie* in his left. The women were dressed in heavy bead skirts of blue and red and black, and wore brightly coloured kerchiefs on their bosoms. Their backs were bare but for the knots of the kerchiefs, and the men's chests were bare but for the pods hanging upon them; when the dance began, quick red glints of light shone from the naked skins of both the men and the women.

Up and down in front of the row of stamping men one woman moved with small toe-first steps, bringing her heel sharply down on the earth after the toe had poised itself. The step was small and rapidly repeated, while above, far more slowly, her dark brown body heaved from side to side, as if the small movements of her feet generated the greater, slower movement of her torso, as she went along the line of men, to stop at last in front of the man she had chosen. She stopped, and the men ceased stamping, and in front of the man of her choice she treaded the dust of the arena, her body still, only her toes pressing and kneading into the ground; deliberately and delicately she insinuated herself before him. Until that too stopped, and she stood watchfully for a moment, before turning with a laugh and running heavily to her place in the line of women.

The dust the dancers lifted was heavy and did not rise above their knees; so that the drummers squatting to the side of the rows of men and women could hardly be seen, and the sound of the drums seemed to rise insistently from the beaten, flat earth itself. From the centre of the village there was a roar louder but as unbroken as the sound of blood in the ears of the listeners, who sat in front of the huts around the arena—small circular huts, built of poles and clay, with pointed roofs of thatch.

The man who had been chosen by the woman came out smiling and stepping high, and when he and the men behind him brought their feet down, all the seeds in the pods around their ankles rattled and shivered with a dry, sighing sound that did not linger but was caught in the shiver of the next foot lifted. And to this, and to the sound of the drums and the clapping of the hands of the women, there was added another sound: a heavy swishing it was, as dry as the shiver of the pods around the men's ankles, but far heavier and longer, each one coming like a gust of wind and then receding. Then the next whirr that receded, and the next, like a wind in dry reeds, but with a heavy undeviating rhythm that no wind could have.

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The women were moving the cheeks of their buttocks, and as they moved, the beads lifted and fell, and each layer of beads clattered within itself. But together the sound was solemn and assertive, and the swishing of the skirts of beads rose above the sound of the drums until the circle of trampled earth was filled with the sound that came as regularly as the fall and hiss of waves upon a shore. The man moved in front of the women, whose bodies worked in a strange plunging movement to keep going the lift and fall of their buttocks and the sound of their skirts. They stood in one place, not stirring from it; their bodies undulated, plunging and straightening.

Until with a leap and a double prance of his legs the man fell in front of the woman that it was his turn to choose; he was on his haunches for only a moment, before twirling back elaborately to the rank of men, leaving the woman to come out as the others who had gone before her. Only, where the men had come out smiling and lifting their knees high, the women hung back and smiled and turned to the others. But the drums beat on, and the men sang their phrase repeatedly, and the women clapped their hands, and the chosen woman had to go out between the ranks and begin her dance. And by custom the men and women did not dance in pairs, but each danced alone after he or she had been chosen.

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IN THE end, it was the women who gave up. Their line wavered and broke, and the women stood in pairs and groups; the drums shuffled into silence. So the men broke their line too, casually, half-relieved. But two men complained that they wanted to go on dancing, and the others cleared the arena for them.

Now the two dancers stood at opposite ends of the arena, and waited for the drums to start again. And this time the drums did so not with the pattering beats of the rhythm of the previous dance, but with single harsh strokes. And this time the men did not have their shields and *kieries* drooping in their hands, but held the *kieries* head-high, and their shields above their heads. Together they had lifted them, and together they brought their shields down, in a lightning twist of their bodies, and beat the shields against the ground. "Hah!" they gasped out from their chests as they bent to the ground. Then their bodies flashed straight again. And they advanced towards one another, beating their shields against the ground and flinging their bodies straight, so that the shields were in front of their faces and the *kieries* above their heads. "Hah!" They seemed to trail towards one another at times, when they bent low, and then they seemed to be leaping towards one another as if no time could be wasted. And then they would trail again, their bodies bowed to the ground, their shields flat before them.

Sweeping the arena, they came to one another. Animal-like their approach had been, with rushes followed by cunning pauses. But now they were face to face and there was no more use in concealment. So they rose slowly, and the drum changed its beat, and now they danced before each other. They brought their knees to their chests in a swirling movement, a lift to which their hips turned, so that their whole bodies swirled in a spiral as each knee was lifted and then thrust down again with all the force of the body behind it. They danced around one another in this fierce exaggeration of a footstep, and sometimes when one would be making this step, the other would tread lightly away on the tips of his toes, kicking away from himself with the delicacy and swiftness of the pointed dance of a buck. "Hah! Hah! Hah!" they said now, with every step, and the sound was not a word, it came warningly from their throats, their chests, without volition. And the climax of the dance came when the *kierie* was lifted and the shield was lowered and they approached one another as if the blow would come now, while their bodies leaped to the beat of their blood, and sweat was thrown from them in arcs of glittering drops, and the drums clamoured distantly, and the women raised an ululation of terror that

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sounded like grief, as the men danced closer and closer in the posture of striking, until they were so close that their shields touched and their legs could no longer be lifted and the *kieries* were lifted still higher and hung above their heads, black clubs in the sunlight. But this was a dance, not a fight, and at that moment they dropped their arms, they dropped the *kieries*, and pranced away from one another. One face had been set in a pout, the other square and open in a show of teeth that had not been a smile, but now both faces relaxed and as the drum-beats rose faster in a final roar the men went on tip-toes from one another, with little kicks in the dust, and leaps, and jerks of their arms, like memories of the battle they had remembered and fought again in their dance.

*

THERE was a round of applause from all sides of the arena.

"I thought the women were sweet—waggling their bottoms like that," a girl said. She was sitting between two men, one elderly, obviously her father, the other young, perhaps a suitor.

"Their muscle control is remarkable," the father said, moving a little uneasily on his chair.

"Lack of control, I'd say," the young man said.

All three smiled, without much amusement.

They were sitting in a brightly-dressed throng of whites, on one side of the arena; on the other side there was an even more brightly-dressed crowd of Africans. It was mid-winter, but all the men were in shirt-sleeves, the women in dresses open at the neck and the arms.

"Still, it's a jolly good show," the girl said.

"The whole Festival is a jolly good show," her young man reminded her.

"It is, it is," the father agreed.

The girl turned her sun-glasses from the one to the other. The sun-glasses masked her face, only her bright-red lipsticked mouth could be seen, and the tip of her straight nose, and the shadowed skin of her cheeks. Her voice was flat, colonial, almost nagging. She said: "It's much better than I thought it would be."

"Oh, yes," her father said, uncomfortable on his wooden chair—the seating arrangements were as simple as possible, so that the tribal village would look as much like a village in the bush as it possibly could—"everyone has done very well."

*

EVERYONE had indeed done very well. The Festival was gay, light-hearted, well laid-out. Above the trees among the pavilions there rose a slender white shaft, the Tower of Light, the centre-point of the Festival, around which, in sunshine and shadow by day and in bright coloured lights by night, there were ranged the elaborate pavilions of all the governments of Africa, and those of private industries in the colony and the countries in Africa outside it. There were innumerable large open-air cafés, there was the Festival Hall where orchestras and opera and dramatic companies imported from England gave nightly performances, there was an expensive night-club where artists from the continent performed in an intimate cabaret, there was a fun-fair behind the main exhibition site, where a star of light, a big wheel, revolved unevenly behind all the other lights.

The pavilions and exhibitions were all light and airy, and built in a recognisable, unserious, sketchy festival style, in which thickly-painted sackcloth did for concrete and wooden beams for steel, and the daring curves and angles of the pavilions leaped and jibbed in white and brown and blood-red against the unfaltering blueness of the winter sky overhead. Lawns of quickly-growing grass had been laid down between the trees, and flower-beds were everywhere; there were innumerable vistas along which the eye could travel or be taken pleasantly by surprise by a sudden break in the view. And there was an African village, with the dancing-arena, and Africans brought into town from the tribal reserves to paint their paintings and

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dance their dances while the visitors looked on. The Africans didn't seem to mind, and the dances were strange and exciting among the arches and parabolas, the pretensions and gaieties of the various government pavilions. Loudspeakers distributed music from poles all over the festival site, but sometimes, in the afternoons, even at the far end of the site, the air would be disturbed with the delicate thunder of the tribal drums, competing with the voices that languished in English tones for their true loves or the louder American voice that sang the praises of a place called Oklahoma.

And certainly the African village was never empty. When the other pavilions, in the blank midday pauses, were empty, their shade unused, the pictures of social welfare developments in Tanganyika unstared at, the model of the diamond-mines in Kimberley unilluminated by the button that it cost nothing to press, when young men stood idle in the Hall of Industry with no one to whom they could explain the workings of the bisected jet engine, even then there were throngs of people in the African village. The urbanised, dandified, sophisticated Africans in clothes like those of the whites seemed to be drawn to the village neither by shame nor by patronage, but rather by amusement: amused they walked through the village, amused they watched the dancers, amused they made comments to the tribal Africans who sat half-naked in the sun making clay pots or threading beadwork necklaces. But the whites—the well-dressed, sun-tanned, tall, colonial-born whites—walked through more solemnly with their cameras slung before them, and their comments, even of the most stupid and prejudiced among them, were tinged with a kind of quietness that was almost like respect for a people who, even in the artificial conditions of the Festival, were patently doing what they took for granted they should do, and who had a way of life that asserted itself with some conviction among the foreign architecture—a conviction made more strong, not less so, by the fact that what they were doing was a doomed activity, as the presence of the urbanised, sophisticated, and amused Africans of the town testified.

And as the speeches at the opening of the Festival had testified. The speeches could have been made at the opening of almost any festival in any country in Africa where the whites have settled, and the centenary that was being celebrated will no doubt find its parallel in other centenaries still to be celebrated. This, the colony's leading public figures and the colony's leading newspapers, had none of them failed to declare, was a momentous time in the history of the colony; and the Festival did not only celebrate the achievements of the past but symbolised the future. The Tower of Light was a beacon illuminating the path of progress, lighting up the way the colony had come, the way the colony had yet to go—and so on, and so on, and so on again.

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THE Festival site was so cleanly, carefully, successfully modern that it was always rather disappointing to come out of it and find oneself staring down one or other of the broad avenues that led to the centre of the town in which the Festival was taking place, and which would be there long after the Festival had been dismantled. For the town was an unlovely modern straggle of a place, dominated at its centre by a few tin-pot miniature skyscrapers of six or seven or ten storeys apiece. The streets of the town were very wide, the pavements were broad, there was a lot of space for sale, and within these spaces the buildings, crammed on their little plots, were at a loss. There was a lot of space around them, a lot of sand, a lot of corrugated iron stuck into the sand, a lot of grass growing against the walls.

The tall grass was everywhere, even among the factories at the bottom of the town, among the houses where the whites lived, among the pinched sub-economic locations where the blacks lived; the grass grew thickly in the veld that surrounded the town—the veld that could occasionally be seen, dry and yellow and unchanging, shadowed only by

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the low, wild trees, at the end of the otherwise most suburban of roads. Because it was winter, the dry season, the grass was stick-like, and every night all round the town there were smudges of red and black where the veld was burning in fires that scented the air in the town day and night with a smell that was faint and inescapable—the charred, distant smell of destruction.

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BUT opposites meet and resolve themselves into one another in ways that the simple categorising mind finds hard to follow. The last dance of the day was neither beautiful, elegant, nor proud, and though it seemed to be the most elaborately prepared, and though it went on and on, it seemed to be quite without any centre of life: the dancers seemed to do whatever took their fancy, and whatever took their fancy was usually dull.

There were some half-dozen dancers, and a drummer. The drummer was the only one among them who was not wearing a mask of some sort and a special regalia. The others all wore brown and yellow suits that seemed to be made out of a raffia-like material that covered their bodies completely. Two of them had feathers stuck on these suits, and long, trailing trains of feathers; another two represented male and female figures, the female figure having enormous pointed breasts thrust from her chest, of the same material, and the male figure having rather high up, at the point where his navel probably was, a pole that was so long that it seemed to be more like a denuded flagstaff that he had to carry in a parade. The fifth figure simply wore the suit, his being a bald-looking white in colour.

The masks were made of a dark wood, and fitted closely round the faces of the dancers, being attached to the neck of each suit by a kind of hood that came over the head. The holes for the eyes and the mouth on the mask had been burned out with hot metal, so there was no relief from the darkness of the colour of the wood where the centres of expression, the eyes and the mouth, should have been. Of each dancer only the toes and the bottoms of the feet could be seen, for the suits narrowed down into a kind of leggings at the ankles. Brown and yellow they were striped, alternately, in rather dirty, mud-like stripes. And above were the dark, unrelieved, overwhelming wooden faces.

The first four dancers capered about. The drummer pattered away at his little drum and sang sadly to himself in the yellow light of the sun, squatting in the warm, red dust, and the four dancers went about the arena and waggled their legs and their arms and fell to the ground. They took no notice of each other and they made no sound. They went from one side of the arena to the other, but haphazardly, they met in the centre, equally haphazardly, once or twice they bumped into each other, but each simply went on his separate way again. They could hardly have been said to be dancing, it was difficult to say what they were doing. They jumped about, they rolled about, they covered themselves in dust, they stood upright and shook their heads, they waved their arms again. The drummer did not look up, he watched the drum between his legs and drummed lightly and sang to himself.

And this went on and on. Who could tell how well or badly they were dancing? Who could tell what they were trying to do?

Then the fifth dancer, the one in the bald white suit, began dancing, and it was easy to see what he was doing. He wasn't a dancer so much as a mimic, and for us he mimicked a monkey, a lizard, a bird that couldn't fly. But he too seemed to act without any joy or exhilaration. It was the weariest, least joyous performance imaginable, and it flickered only once or twice, when the mimic ran chattering across the ground, pretending to be a baboon, and squatted on his hind legs and made a grab at a pretended insect, and then examined the insect in his paws, as a baboon might. But the man didn't believe that he was a baboon, and didn't want us to believe that he was a baboon. He was never anything but a man trying on the rôle of a lizard, or a bird that couldn't fly. Trying it on, trying it on: there was something strangely cold and

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debasing about his performance, about the way he had no conviction and generated no excitement, and yet went on with it, over and over again. There was no place in this dance for joy or exhilaration or conviction.

At last the drummer changed his beat, and the other four dancers began clapping their hands, and they skipped around the arena and indicated to the members of the audience that they too should clap their hands. Very few among the whites clapped their hands, but the Africans obliged, and soon there was a slow, steady hand-clap echoing in the arena. The girl in the sun-glasses, between the two men, was one of the few white people who were clapping. She was, one could see, being young, carefree, enthusiastic: one could see what she was being, and she looked from man to man on either side of her to make sure that they too had seen. She too was trying it on, trying it on.

To the sound of the clapping the dancers suddenly left the arena, without warning, and though for some minutes the audience clapped on they did not reappear. Then the loudspeakers crackled and a voice announced that that was the end of the afternoon's entertainment in the arena. A little dissatisfied, a little puzzled, a little dispirited, the members of the audience got to their feet and began making their way irregularly out of the mock African village.

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Joseph and Stewart Alsop

Why Russia is Strong

LAST summer, when one of these reporters was in Moscow, the Soviets put on their annual air show at Tushino airfield. The ambience was charming—like a grandiose but gay country fair. What was shown was rather less charming—above all the powerful flights of the new Soviet medium- and long-range jet bombers, the "Badgers" and "Bisons." When these great planes were roaring by, high over the heads of the crowd, one of the American air attachés had an inspiration. He trained his binoculars on the official tribune, where Khrushchev, Bulganin, and the other leaders of the Soviet hierarchy were watching the display. The binoculars revealed a scene as telling in its own way as the famous photograph of Adolf Hitler doing his little jig to celebrate the fall of France. As the new Soviet bombers flew past, the men in the high tribune could not contain their jubilation. Every face was wreathed in the broadest smiles. The ebullient Khrushchev quite literally jumped for joy, bouncing up and down until the last bomber was out of sight. Even his more sober colleagues fell to shaking one another by the hand and thumping one another on the back, in open, self-congratulating delight.

In this oddly schoolboyish manner, the Soviet leaders were celebrating the defeat of the United States in an unseen but deadly serious race. The race started when the Soviets made their original Chinese copy of a strayed American B-29 that force-landed in Siberia during the culminating assault on Japan. The tremendous American lead was first overcome. Then, in the vital category of intercontinental jet bombers, the Soviets completed their "Bison" prototype in half the time we took to complete the prototype of our comparable B-52. They are now producing three times as many "Bisons" as we are producing B-52's. They will also reach their final output goal of twenty "Bisons" per month considerably sooner than we shall reach our much lower goal of seventeen B-52's per month. No wonder Khrushchev jumped for joy.

Yet this triumph over the United States, in a field in which the American lead used to seem secure for eternity, was really far less important than the other and much larger triumph which those "Bisons" and "Badgers" also symbolised. In the most vivid and visible way, the big planes were symbols of the transformation of the Soviet Union into a modern military-industrial great power.

The immense growth of Soviet military-industrial power is the subject of this article. It is an urgent subject; but it is also complex, and before we can begin to make sense of it, we must deal with a paradox that has bedevilled and confused almost all Western thinking about the Soviet Union. Another

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American observer stated the paradox earthily but neatly on that sunny afternoon at Tushino.

"How the devil can the Soviets be making these 'Bisons,' " the American asked, "when they can't even make a decent flush toilet? Dammit, if I ever found such a thing in this benighted country, I'd want to put it in a glass case, like a Cellini cup."

Like the "Bisons," in truth, Russia's seldom-flushing toilets are also symbols. They stand (at least in the eyes of plumbing-conscious Americans) for the extreme drabness and discomfort of daily life in Russia. They imply the persistent lowness of the general standard of living. But this lowness of the Russian living standard is a thrice-told tale, which can be easily summed up in two short sentences. The year 1955 was the best year the Russian people have enjoyed in more than a quarter of a century. Yet in this best year, the real value of food, goods, and services received by the average Russian was certainly less than a fifth of the value of food, goods, and services received by the average American.

For this very reason, because the Russian people are still so much poorer than the free peoples of the West, almost all of us tend to believe that the Soviet Union must be basically weaker than the West. Principally for this reason, even the American and British intelligence forecasters have been taken by surprise by every Soviet military-industrial success from the Soviet A-bomb onwards.

But in fact, the Soviet Union is strong precisely because the Russian people are poor.

THERE is the ugly heart of the matter, which makes the simultaneous presence of "Bisons" and absence of workable flush toilets not only logical but even inevitable. In order to see why this really is the heart of the matter, it is only necessary to picture the Soviet Union as a mammoth industrial corporation, a gigantic vertical trust. The trust is engaged in every kind of primary and secondary production. It is wholly self-contained, and even grows the food to stock its workers' commissaries. But its true end-products are "Bisons," "Badgers," and other implements of national power, just as surely as Buicks and Chevrolets and Cadillacs are the end-products of the manifold activities of General Motors.

The management of the Soviet Union, Inc., is both able and ruthless. The labour force is huge, and its stern discipline makes strikes unthinkable. The raw material resources are very great indeed. The industrial plant is also very large. But the management is unshakeably determined to expand and develop the industrial plant still further, until the Soviet Union towers over every competitor. And the vast Soviet programme of industrial expansion and development is being carried on under forced draught, with no dangerous borrowing or stock-selling to raise new working capital, which might give outsiders a voice in the management.

Any corporation in this situation has one easy way to finance its expansion programme. It can cut its operating overheads to the bone, holding down wages, skimping on workers' housing, even charging double prices in the workers' commissaries in order to take a second bite out of the annual wage bill. By these means, although the workers will suffer, the corporation can finance its own expansion from its own resources. Up to a certain point, indeed, the more the workers are made to suffer, the more resources will be released for investment in expansion. And this, as we shall try to show, is just about what the Soviet managers have been doing.

A distinctly new approach to Soviet economics is required by this simple image of the Soviet-state-as-industrial-corporation, if the validity of the image itself can be proven. In particular, the image imposes altogether novel tests of Soviet success or failure. In our Western calculations of gross national product, for example, equal weight is given to £1,000 worth of steel and £1,000 worth of face cream, £1,000 worth of petroleum and £1,000 worth of olive oil, £1,000 worth of new aircraft factory and £1,000 worth of new suburban housing. In the recent controversy in ENCOUNTER, Mr. Colin Clark

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actually seemed to give greater weight to the housing than to the aircraft factory; and Mr. Peter Wiles did not challenge him on this point. The same method of economic calculation is also used, of course, by the American experts whom Mr. Clark so vigorously denounced for exaggerating the Soviet economic achievement.

But if our image is correct, the success or failure of the Soviet economy cannot usefully be tested by the condition of the people, unless it is also argued that the masses, dissatisfied with their low living standard, will shortly rise against their masters, or will engage in sit-down strikes or slow-downs, or will otherwise disrupt the productive processes that the Soviet rulers really care about. If a cannon manufacturer found the money to double his cannon foundries by halving his workers' wages, Mr. Clark might deplore the means used; but even Mr. Clark would not dispute the fact that the manufacturer had successfully increased his cannon output by 100 per cent.

IN CERTAIN obvious ways, our image fits the available data on the Soviet Union with extreme precision. The prices in the workers' commissaries are indeed more than doubled by a 60 per cent turnover tax on everything the Russian people eat and wear and use, which brings back into the Soviet treasury an astonishingly high proportion of the annual wage bill. And by this expedient of the turnover tax, the Soviet rulers are also able to set their overt income tax rates at 19th century levels, and thus to offer earning-incentives to their managerial class such as hardly exist any longer in the capitalist economies.

These reporters naturally feel more hesitation about the deeper implications of our image, for we are neither Russian experts nor trained economists, but only professional political observers and amateur historians. Yet it seems to us to stand out like a sore thumb, from everything known about the Soviet investment pattern, that the increase of national power in the crudest form is the desired end-product of the Soviet system. The known facts, we admit, do not so clearly establish the direct connection between the low Russian standard of living and the rapid growth of Soviet military-industrial power. This growth has been aided, no doubt, by centralised Soviet planning and all the other factors listed by Mr. Wiles in his now-famous speech to the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Milan; and the Soviet planners have been helped, too, by Russia's wealth in mineral and other material resources. But once again it seems to us to stand out from the whole record like a sore thumb, that the *basic* secret of Soviet military-industrial growth is the release of resources for state investment by the persistent and enforced lowness of the living standard. Not only is this the simplest explanation of what has happened; it is also the only fully satisfying explanation; and it fits the available data at all points.

Turning, then, to the record: the Soviet pattern was set, and the Soviet success story began, when Stalin junked the New Economic Policy and launched the First Five Year Plan in 1928. By then, the famine-years of the revolution had already mercifully ended. The NEP had restored the Russian standard of life to a still low but quite bearable level. But the NEP had not brought about any great and rapid increase in Soviet industrial productivity. This still stood, in 1928, not far above the Czarist level of 1913. Hence the First Five Year Plan was inaugurated. Thereafter, the standard of living in the Soviet Union dropped by one half.

In order to enforce acceptance of this plunge into misery, the Soviet state quite literally had to declare war on the Russian people, in much the same way the Spartan ephors used to declare an annual war against the helots. The collectivisation of agriculture, with its attendant peasant massacres, was a direct and conscious attempt to release a larger share of the gross national product for purposes of state investment. As the state took more in this and other ways, the people unavoidably got less.

The human cost of the state's war against the people was fearful. The economic waste

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was also considerable. But despite the incidental waste, which had its main impact on the living standard in any case, the state won the war. The programme of industrial expansion and military build-up embodied in the early Five Year Plans went forward without serious check until war conversion began in 1938–9. The crude but sturdy industry that was thus constructed fulfilled its wartime purpose, pouring out such quantities of tanks, artillery, and ammunition that, in the single attack on Berlin, more shells were expended by the Red Army than were produced in America and Britain in the whole course of the war. And since the defeat of Hitler, the Soviet programme of industrial expansion and military build-up has again gone forward, on the same basic principle but in a more complex manner and on a more ambitious scale, until the present time.

IT IS questionable, to be sure, whether Stalin realised from the first that he would have to fight a war against his own people, in order to carry out his programme of military and industrial build-up. Quite possibly he believed at the outset that the Five Year Plan targets could be attained by mere "Bolshevik planning and Bolshevik enthusiasm," without condemning his own people to hunger and misery. Yet the boldest political innovations have commonly been arrived at by instinct. The man who has the instinct must receive due credit as a political originator. And if you are studying the growth of Soviet power rather than the trend of Soviet morals, you must give Stalin the highest credit for the most original contribution to modern statecraft—the discovery that the wretchedness of the people could be converted into the strength of the state.

Without too clearly enunciating this principle, Stalin himself revealed the priorities that logically flow from it in his epoch-making 1946 speech charting Russia's post-war course. With the Russian people still very close to starvation, Stalin coldly announced that all the state's resources must be immediately mobilised, not to improve the lot of the people, but to begin again the stern task of building overwhelming military-industrial power for the state. The targets were set, not for one Five Year Plan, but for three Five Year Plans; and until Stalin's targets began to be attained, as they have regularly been to date, the living standard of the Russian people was kept just about where it was at the end of the fighting.

To be sure, the Soviet rulers are not maniacs. By the end of his life, Stalin may perhaps have believed in terror for terror's sake, but even he did not believe in wretchedness for wretchedness's sake. As the Soviet gross product pushed rapidly upwards, the condition of the people was gradually improved. Their slice of the pie, in percentage terms, was not increased; indeed, it is arguable that the people's slice is now a smaller percentage than in the bleak two years just after the war. But as the whole pie grew vastly bigger, the people's slice grew bigger too. This has obvious political advantages; and it is even a paying proposition by the peculiar standards of Soviet economics. For the Soviet rulers get the hardest sort of work out of their labour force by a remorseless piecework-and-punishments, carrot-and-stick technique; and the technique obviously works a good deal better when carrots are reasonably available.

In the Soviet Union today, therefore, the people are no longer wretched, as they were wretched in the worst years of the 1930's or the hard times of post-war reconstruction. The masses now have plenty of coarse food to eat, enough clothes to keep them warm in winter and decent in summer, and fully as much housing space *per capita* as the prisoners in the less progressive American jails. The classes—the upper ten million of bureaucrats, military officers, industrial managers, scientists, technicians, intellectuals, Stakhanovites, and the like—are positively well off in their own eyes. Keeping the classes content is especially desirable politically. Offering them solid incentives is also especially desirable economically. So the Soviet classes are now receiving a novel flow of such bourgeois comforts as washing-

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machines, refrigerators, and, for the real upper crust, new automobiles.

YET this quite marked improvement in the lot of the Russian people is essentially marginal, in the sense that it has been accomplished with what was left over, after meeting higher priorities. There has been no real deviation from the grand principle established by Stalin, that the well-being of the people comes second, and the increase of the state's power comes first. The present régime in the Soviet Union in fact embodies an open reaffirmation of this grand principle. When he was Premier, Malenkov advocated changing the priorities in favour of consumers' goods. On this specific count, Malenkov was condemned for heresy, while Khrushchev moved upwards to the highest seat at the Presidium table. Against this background, the events of the recent Communist Party Congress were marvellously ironical. Soviet industrial production had now risen so far that it was possible to promise an eventual reduction in the work-week from forty-eight hours to forty-two hours. Khrushchev allotted to himself the task of making this popular announcement. Meanwhile Malenkov, the defeated advocate of more goods for the people's use, had to confess his former error all over again; and to Malenkov was allotted the task of publicly warning that the people's well-being must always come second, and the increase of the state's power must always come first.

In applying this grand principle, the Gosplan plainly divides the Soviet Union's gross national product into three successive slices. Slice one of the available resources goes for capital improvements, which chiefly means strengthening the industrial base. Slice two is directly invested in military power, meaning all the items included in the American defence, atomic energy, and military aid budgets. And the people, the consumers, then get whatever is left over. The relative size of the three slices is the subject of bitter controversy among the experts. In our opinion, the majority of the experts leave too little room, within the confines of the Soviet gross national product, for the immense industrial effort and equally immense military effort which the Soviets have made in the last ten years. This is another reason, we suspect, why the intelligence forecasters have been so invariably surprised by every Soviet military-industrial achievement — why they have always grossly underestimated the time the Soviets have needed to do each job, and why, in the case of the creation of the massive Soviet jet aircraft industry, they all but failed to foresee that the job would be done at all. Hence we incline to accept as valid the more radical expert estimates. One such, which convinces us, shows the Soviets annually spending a quarter of their gross national product on capital improvement and another quarter for military purposes, with only 50 per cent going to the consumers. In any case, although they quarrel among themselves about the degree, the Russian experts and economists are virtually unanimous that the Soviet rates of capital and military investment are far higher than the Western rates. And it is very obvious that these high investment rates, which are necessarily achieved at the expense of an artificially low living standard, are the principal cause of the phenomenally rapid growth of Soviet military-industrial power.

THIS growth is best measured in terms of the four basic industrial commodities, which are the four corner-stones of the whole structure. Since 1928, Soviet steel production has multiplied ten times, from 4·5 million metric tons to 45 million. Soviet coal production has multiplied more than ten times, from 36 million tons to 390 million. Soviet petroleum production has multiplied six times, from 12 million tons to 70 million. And Soviet electric power production has multiplied thirty-four times, from 5 billion kilowatt hours to 170 billion.

Soviet steel output, for instance, therefore exceeds the combined steel output of the two leading industrial nations of the old world, Britain and West Germany. There is little room for further argument about the brute mass of the Soviet economy. The question

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remains, whether the Soviets have what we Americans rather annoyingly like to call the know-how to use their steel, as well as the steel itself. The true answer to this question is suggested by a recent experience of former Senator William Benton, when he visited a Moscow bookstore. The place was overrun by a howling mob of teen-agers; and these Russian fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds were excitedly buying, not comic books or Westerns, but solid, heavy texts on physics, engineering, and chemistry.

The truth is that the Soviet state, once again behaving like a gigantic corporation, has carefully set up an industrial training programme to go hand in hand with its industrial expansion programme. When the Five Year Plans began, capable technical men were such rarities in Russia that the most vital projects had to be confided to foreigners, like the American engineer, Hugh Cooper, who built the famous Dnepropetrovsk hydro-electric plant. But starting in the early 1930's, the whole machine of Soviet education, which is the largest in the world, was single-mindedly adapted to a maximum output of engineers, scientists, and other possessors of know-how.

Today, Soviet scientific education is demonstrably more rigorous than American scientific education. The work load of the students is at least 40 per cent heavier. If one judges by last year's Soviet equivalent of a college entrance examination in physics, Russian boys know about as much physics by the end of their last year in high school as the physics majors at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have learned by the end of their sophomore year. Besides insisting on this higher standard, the Soviets are also graduating three times more engineers and scientists from their universities than are now being graduated by the American universities. Americans should perhaps prepare themselves to hear Russians saying, before too long, that "the United States just doesn't have the know-how."

At any rate, the common American theory that the Soviets "don't have the know-how," and have therefore relied on spies and German scientists to build their "Badgers" and "Bisons," A-bombs and H-bombs and the rest, is pure, self-deceiving, complacent nonsense. Foreigners, including spies, have probably contributed rather less to the Soviet military-industrial successes of the last eight years than the brilliant foreign scientists who fled from Hitler contributed to America's Manhattan District Project. Furthermore, the spy-and-German-scientist theory wholly blurs and covers up the most important meaning of the ominous military-industrial successes that the Soviets have now achieved. These successes mean, in fact, that the Soviet industrial complex is not only brutally massive, but also technologically rich. For you simply cannot build A-bombs or H-bombs, "Bisons" or "Badgers" without a formidable array of the most technically advanced supporting industries, such as electronics, and without full mastery of all the most difficult specialised techniques, such as high-temperature metallurgy.

IN SOME cases, indeed, we now know that Soviet technology is actually ahead of Western technology. For instance, the admirably bold "Bison" engine, which has twice the power of the B-52 engine, showed that Soviet jet engine design had about two years' lead on U.S. jet engine design when the "Bison" first took the air. And this kind of evidence has been confirmed and amplified by the eye-witness evidence of the technical missions that were exchanged during the brief, delusive reign of the famous spirit of Geneva.

One of these was a mission of Western European steel-masters led by the executive director of the British Iron and Steel Board, Sir Robert Shone. Sir Robert found the Soviet steel plants highly productive and extremely modern: "no instrument one could think of was missing." The larger, fully integrated Soviet plants were more efficient, in terms of output-per-worker, than three-quarters of the steel plants in Britain; they could be "broadly compared" to the "top end" of the British steel industry. The British steel industry had been somewhat scornful of the Soviet offer to build a steel plant for India. But Sir Robert

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glumly concluded that if the Soviets chose to compete with Britain in exporting steel products, they could meet their orders, undercut British export prices, and make a nice capitalistic profit, too, because of the cheapness of the hard-working Soviet labour force.

Still more interesting was the report of the American automation mission, which went to the Soviet Union to inspect Russian applications of the most *avant garde* of all production methods. The mission was composed of hard-headed American engineers, such as Nevin L. Bean, top technical man in the Ford Motor Company's automatic transmission plant, who could never have been fooled by *papier mâché* production lines. They saw what they asked to see, and their request-list of factories to be visited was as fully representative as the American intelligence could make it.

Mr. Bean returned from his journey much impressed by Soviet work on computers; much impressed, too, by the quality of Soviet machine tools, and with the suspicion that the Soviet machine-tool output actually exceeded American output. (The suspicion was a proof of Mr. Bean's good judgment, incidentally, for the official American estimate of Soviet output for 1955 is 105,000 machine-tool units, as against 88,000 in the U.S.) One of the initial Soviet experiments with automation, a ball-bearing production line, struck Mr. Bean as "really beautiful," and he thought it was just a little better than anything of the same sort in America. For all these reasons, he was convinced the Soviets could fulfil the very ambitious programme of industrial automation included in the new Five Year Plan.

Naturally, Mr. Bean saw some things to criticise in Soviet industrial practice, such as the still widespread use of unskilled hand labour to do the rough hauling which is done in America with moving machinery. Some primitive survivals are temporarily inevitable in the kind of transformation Soviet industry has been undergoing. It is probably cheaper for the Soviet industrial managers to use their hopelessly unskilled hands in this manner. Moving machinery will only become an economy when these older workers are replaced by the well-trained new generation now coming out of the Soviet trade schools and *technicums*.

There are other such primitive survivals, too. For instance, many Soviet concerns still manufacture almost all their own components, including even things like screws, in order to avoid production delays resulting from trifling but crucial supply shortages. There is no question, moreover, that the technical level of the directly military Soviet industrial effort is appreciably higher than the technical level of Soviet industry as a whole; and the technical level of the neglected consumer industries is still very low indeed in most cases. Hence two of the dramas of the new Five Year Plan period are to be the primary struggle to eliminate these primitive survivals, by introducing automation, by enforcing industrial rationalisation, and in other ways; and the parallel but secondary effort to improve the efficiency of the consumer industries, not by changing the investment priorities, but by financing the improvement from the people's growing half of the gross national product. Eliminating the primitive survivals is becoming urgent for the Soviet planners, since their industry is beginning to suffer from a labour shortage. Improving the consumer industries is also useful, always assuming the job can be done with what is left over after the state's needs are met. For both these special purposes, the Soviets now wish to familiarise themselves with Western industrial practices in areas which were formerly unimportant to them. Therefore they are now being adjured to learn from the West by their leaders, in those speeches that sound more and more like rude parodies of Mr. Harlow Curtice distributing praise, blame, and directives to a meeting of General Motors division chiefs.

These things having been said, however, one must come back to Mr. Bean's final verdict. This was that "the Soviets are now coming up into a very high technical era [which it is] pretty frightening to think about." That verdict raises the ultimate question which this report is an attempt to

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answer. How much, in sum, should America and the West be frightened by the Soviet military-industrial progress that so astonished Mr. Bean?

ON THE surface, there is no reason to be frightened. Despite the progress already made, the Soviet economy is still far behind that of the United States; and the balance is still more adverse if the resources of the entire Western alliance are weighed against the resources of the whole Soviet empire. American steel output, for example, was 117 million tons in 1955, whereas the Soviets, with a 1955 output of 45 million tons, were still producing steel at the American rate of thirty-eight years ago. Overall, America's gross national product, which of course includes agricultural produce and other non-industrial items, has now reached the fantastic level of $387 billion; and this American product for 1955 was about three times larger than the Soviet national product in the same year.

But these comforting statistics do not take account of the uncomfortable operation of the Soviet grand principle, that the well-being of the people always comes second, and the increase of the state's power always comes first. By keeping down the living standard and investing the proceeds in capital improvement, the Soviet rulers are not only building a great industrial empire, they are also closing the gap between the Soviet Union and the U.S., as they long ago closed the gaps, which were once equally wide, between the Soviet Union and Britain and between the Soviet Union and Germany. To see how fast the last remaining gap is closing, consider the record of the past eight years.

This is the period to look at, because this is the period when the Soviet economy really hit its stride of growth. Before 1948, the Soviets were building a solid base for their industrial expansion. They were learning the pitfalls and exploring the possibilities of their extraordinarily complicated planning process. They were fighting a devastating war from 1941 to 1945. They were busy with post-war reconstruction from 1945 through 1947.

Thereafter, from 1948 through 1955, Soviet steel output rose by no less than 143 per cent, as against a rise of 48 per cent in America. Soviet petroleum output rose by 141 per cent, as against an American rise of 22 per cent. Soviet electric power output rose by 158 per cent, as against an American rise of 68 per cent. Soviet coal output rose by 85 per cent, as against an actual decline of 22 per cent in American coal output. As you might expect, these astonishingly steep increases in Soviet production of the basic commodities were reflected in a steep increase in general industrial production. According to an American government estimate, Soviet industrial production of all types rose by 70 per cent in 1950–5. In the same years, total industrial production in the United States rose by only 25 per cent.

In other words, Soviet industry grew nearly three times as fast as American industry during the last Five Year Plan period. The gap cannot go on closing so rapidly as this, to be sure, since economic growth-rate almost inevitably decreases as economic size increases. In the new Five Year Plan period, the tonnages of steel and other industrial goods that the Soviets propose to add to their gross national product are greater than ever; but the intended percentage of increase over current production is considerably less—because the thing to be increased is larger. Moreover, it is vital to note the lop-sidedness of the growth of Soviet productivity. It has been very rapid in industry, but it has been very slow indeed in agriculture, in housing, and in all the other things that contribute to the people's well-being. Thus the Soviet-American gap can close pretty soon in the industrial sector, for Soviet industry is still growing far faster than American industry despite the slowdown in growth-rate noted above. But meanwhile, because of the lop-sidedness of Soviet economic growth, the American gross national product may still be far larger than the Soviet's.

NO SERIOUS student of the subject doubts that the Soviet economy, even when judged by the purest Western standards,

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is expanding at least somewhat more rapidly than any free world economy. How much faster, is the question that is now debated with some fury. But in the bitterness of their controversy, the experts seem to forget that the kind of thing being grown unhappily matters a lot more than the exact rate of growth. A gerfalcon, for example, may grow much faster or only a little faster than a bird of paradise. Yet it is considerably more significant that while the bird of paradise mainly grows plumes, the gerfalcon mainly grows a steely beak and steely talons. Even in the industrial sector, unhappily, one finds this kind of difference between Soviet and American economic growth. The difference is quickly seen if you take a man-from-Mars look at the industry which is now the balance-wheel of the American economy and the pride of the American nation.

In 1955, America produced just under 8 million automobiles. In the modern age, mass-produced automobiles have wholly reshaped the pattern of American life, radically changing where we live and how we live, where we work and how we get there, and how and where we spend our leisure time. Because of all these changes, we cannot even get to work any longer without our own automobiles. Great numbers of automobiles are now a necessity to us; and in this sense they are now an element of national power.

But suppose privately owned automobiles had never become an American necessity. Suppose, in fact, that automobiles had never been permitted to reshape the American social pattern. We should then be getting on quite adequately, using the various means of public transportation or even our own legs. Our lives would then be poorer in many different ways. But although it may sound un-American to say so, the sum of American national power would not be appreciably smaller.

For just this reason, the Soviet motor industry is still a puny dwarf, which produced only about 350,000 trucks and 80,000 automobiles last year. In the Soviet Union, the railroads and waterways do all the long hauling. The truck output is just sufficient to meet the short-haul need, plus the needs of the armed forces. The Soviet people must choose between walking or jamming themselves, like human sardines, into horribly overcrowded trolleys and buses, or trains and river boats for longer journeys. Only the most privileged of the privileged ever know the liberation of the individual that is conferred by owning your own car.

But in the Soviet Union, meanwhile, the manufacturer of automobiles does not absorb 20 per cent of the annual steel output, plus huge quantities of rubber, glass, light metals, and plastics, plus a large share of the most skilled manpower. Automobiles on the road do not burn up over a third of the annual output of petroleum products. The improvement of automobile plants does not demand an annual capital outlay of nearly $1 billion. The Supreme Soviet is not now considering whether to spend another $50 million to relieve the congestion of their highways. Indeed, the Soviet transport pattern is so Spartanly planned around the railroads and waterways that the Soviets manage very well without anything Americans would think worthy of the name of highway. And all the incalculable resources that are saved in all these different ways, the Soviet rulers invest in a stronger and stronger heavy industrial base and a stronger and stronger military superstructure.

The case of the American automobile industry must of course be multiplied many times over by all the other burgeoning industries that serve the American consumer. After this multiplication, you must also add the billions of dollars worth of resources that we pour out each year to improve our housing and to enrich our agriculture. All these types of investment mainly increase our comfort and well-being. In peacetime, the comfort-increasing investments consume at least three-fifths of America's annual capital outlay. At best we put no more than two-fifths of our capital outlay into heavy and military industry and into basic transport, which directly increase our national power. In contrast, the Soviet rulers channel about four-fifths of their capital outlay into the power-increasing in-

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vestments, and they then meagrely share out the remaining fifth to give their people more food, better houses, and more and better things to use and enjoy. In addition, the Soviet rate of capital outlay may be as much as 60 per cent higher than the American rate. It is therefore quite possible that the Soviets, with one-third the American gross product, *are already making larger power-increasing industrial investments than America is making*, by the absolute standard of raw materials and man-hours expended. The Soviet grand principle, that the people's well-being comes second, and the increase of state power comes first, operates at all times, in every sphere, and with remarkable results.

To sum up, this principle has had two different economic effects in the last five years. On the one hand, as we have seen, Soviet industrial production has grown very much faster than American industrial production in this period. On the other hand, because of the difference in investment habits that we have been examining, Soviet industry has almost exclusively grown in ways that increase national power, whereas American industry has mainly grown in ways that increase comfort and well-being. By this iron concentration on national power, the Soviets have now overcome the three-to-one American advantage in wealth. In naked power terms, they are not just catching up to the U.S. They are actually passing the United States in the military-industrial power race, as is proven by the extraordinary change that has been taking place in the character of the Soviet armed forces.

In certain respects, of course, the Soviet armed forces have always enjoyed a marked superiority over the American armed forces. Entirely because of the difference of living standards, Soviet uniformed manpower has always cost very much less, soldier for soldier, than American manpower. Pay and maintenance charges for one American soldier have now reached $7,700 a year, whereas the Soviet soldier costs only about one-tenth as much. Partly because of the difference in living standards, the Soviets have always got nearly three times as many fighting units out of a given number of men in uniform. They now get three divisions out of 72,000 men, for instance, whereas the U.S. Army gets hardly more than one division out of the same number. And the Soviet armed forces have always been substantially larger than the American armed forces, although here the ratio has lately been reduced a little. It is now 3,500,000 men under arms in the Soviet Union as against 3,000,000 under arms in the U.S.

In the last five years, however, the Soviets have not only retained their long-standing military superiorities, they have also managed to seize the lead in just those areas where America used to hold the balance true by a stronger industry and a superior technology.

The Red Army, for example, was radically reorganised and entirely re-equipped after World War Two. But a considerable part of this investment is now being junked, and the army itself is also being reduced, because of a programme to "nuclearise" about sixty Soviet infantry divisions. In the U.S., meanwhile, we have only eighteen divisions; most of them still have their World War Two weapons; and we are rearming only five of them for nuclear war. In the same fashion, the Soviets provided their tactical air force, home defence force, and satellite air forces with no less than 15,000 MiG-15's between 1949 and 1954. But all this vast investment is now condemned to the junk pile, and the MiG-15's are being rapidly replaced with the vastly better "Farmer" day-fighters and "Flashlight" night-fighters. In the U.S., meanwhile, we have produced only about 2,800 F-86's, and none of our more advanced fighters has yet reached the stage of serious quantity production.

In general, then, the Soviet armed forces are not only bigger than the American armed forces; they are also beginning to be much better armed. In particular, moreover, the Soviets have made their greatest progress in the crucial area of air-atomic power. As already shown, they are now on a par with the U.S. in quality and well ahead of the

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U.S. in production of medium- and long-range jet bombers and both categories of fighters. In nuclear weapons, American stocks are still greater than Soviet stocks, but their stockpile is rapidly reaching decisive proportions. In ballistic missiles, Soviet technology is at present ahead of American technology; for they are already flight-testing a missile of 1,500 miles range, whereas nothing comparable has passed the drawing-board stage in the United States.

In addition, the striking power of the American Strategic Air Command is almost wholly dependent on overseas bases. These foreign bases are not controlled by the United States politically, and they are soon to be hopelessly exposed strategically to the Soviets' new 1,500-mile ballistic missile. In contrast, the Soviets are now building formidable long-range air-atomic striking power that is wholly self-contained, and entirely free from the crippling dependency that afflicts SAC. Hence a period is coming, if corrective measures are not promptly taken, when our strike can only wound and their strike can kill.

These grave new developments are not balanced, either, by a compensating growth of military power among the other partners in the Western alliance. Because the necessary statistics cannot be procured, and could hardly be organised even if they were procurable, we have omitted the other Western partners and the Soviet satellites from our comparison of the growth of military-industrial power in the two kinds of society. But one point is very clear, and it makes this omission relatively unimportant. In brief, the combined armed power of China, North Korea, North Vietnam, and the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe is at least five times greater than the combined armed power of all the Western allies except the U.S.A. And if it were not for Britain's A-bombs, one would be compelled to put the ratio at ten to one instead of five to one.

OVERALL, then, the change in the economic balance of power is now producing a rather abrupt shift in the military balance of power. Furthermore, this rapid, unfavourable tilt of the whole world power balance is accompanied by another unnoticed trend that is almost equally unfavourable. As World Wars One and Two have already shown, force-in-being is the customary speciality of unfree societies, and reserve strength is the speciality of free societies. On both previous occasions, the Western allies were all but driven to the wall in the first shock of war, experiencing the most terrible losses because their initial force-in-being was inadequate. On both occasions, the Western allies won in the end by the slow process of transforming their economic and manpower reserves into force-in-being, and so achieving a final superiority in armed power.

But in the age of the new weapons, the wisest military theorists believe that force-in-being, in which the Soviets increasingly predominate, has gained in relative value by about 10 per cent per annum compounded; and meanwhile the reserves that the free world still has in such plenty have depreciated in relative value at about the same rate. Thus we can no longer rely on truing up the power balance after a war has started, by converting our automobile factories, for instance, to war production. To be sure, the decision may not and probably will not come by war. Certainly the Soviet rulers are visibly anxious to avoid unnecessary risks, and we most emphatically do not foretell an H-bomb war. But the age of the absolute weapons has still another novel characteristic. Hitherto, when the power balance tilted too menacingly, the menaced nation could always make a war of despair, and with luck and courage that war might be won despite heavy adverse odds at the outset. But the sort of thing that the cornered Neville Chamberlain did in 1939 will be supremely repellent to do in 1959, when the virtually sure price of declaring a war of despair will be almost instantaneous national extinction. As Mr. Paul Nitz has pointed out in the most important article yet published on air-atomic strategy, in a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the mere achievement of acknowledged air superiority is likely to be decisive; for a nation having only

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the power to wound is not likely to challenge a nation having the new kind of power to kill. Thus the power balance, in and of itself, seems to be assuming the kind of meaning that correct manœuvre possessed in the era of Maréchal Saxe, when the great Maréchal would win a major battle, without much inconvenient gunfire or messy bloodshed, by nothing more than the astute occupation of the right high ground. But in the present case, what will be decided is no *guerre de parade*, but a final struggle for the world.

IN THESE circumstances, the time for searching out imaginary Soviet weaknesses—that favourite Western parlour game—is now long past. There is no reason to be complacent, either, about the real weaknesses from which the Soviet system undoubtedly suffers, such as the serious weakness in agriculture. In the first place, this Soviet agrarian weakness is considerably less critical than certain seldom-mentioned weaknesses of the Western alliance, such as the heavy economic dependence of several of the Western partners, and particularly Britain, on the exposed and vulnerable Middle Eastern and Far Eastern areas that are now in rather immediate danger. In the second place, Soviet industrial progress is already permitting the Soviet rulers to barter capital goods and arms against the food and fibre surpluses of underdeveloped countries like Burma and Egypt, earning thereby a handsome political dividend. Sir Robert Shone's findings very plainly suggest that such exchanges may later play a much more conspicuous and inconvenient part in the world trade pattern. And if the Soviet food shortage cannot be relieved in this and other ways, there are always the police. The Soviet rulers have used the police before, and they will hardly hesitate to use them again, to still the unpatriotic murmurs of those who dare to put the people's well-being first instead of second.

This is a time, in truth, for looking at our own problems instead of happily studying Soviet problems; and the central Western problem that must now be faced is decidedly unpalatable. On its own terms, in brief, the unfree Soviet system has now demonstrated that it is more efficient than the free systems of the West. It is capable of building national power more rapidly, more solidly, and with fewer resources. It is one of history's little jokes that this demonstration of the Soviet society's superior efficiency, on *its* terms, should come at a moment when the Western societies are also demonstrating their superior efficiency on *their* terms, in the form of Britain's all-embracing welfare society and America's gorged plenty. But history does not suggest, alas, that great world power contests can be won by free false teeth or even by platoons of air-conditioned Cadillacs. Instead, history rather insistently suggests that great world power contests, such as we are now unhappily engaged in, are finally decided by power. It will matter relatively little to the survivors of the contest whether the power has been directly applied, as was more customary in the past, or has been applied indirectly, as seems somewhat more likely in the present.

THE means of escape from this dilemma are of course ready to hand. The total resources of the United States and the other Western allies are still immeasurably greater than the total resources of the Soviet Union and its imperial dependencies. The Western problem arises solely from the use the Western nations make of their great wealth. A good deal more invested in national defence; a great deal more invested in education; the most modest measures to reduce waste of natural resources and to make the general investment pattern a bit more spare and muscular—these things alone would be enough to alter every time-schedule and to upset every calculation set forth in this article. The question is not whether we *can* do what is needful to survive. The question is, rather, whether we are *willing* to do what is needful; for this demands a measure of plain speaking in which democratic leaders are reluctant to indulge, and a measure of self-denial which, though slight, will hardly command the enthusiasm of free peoples long

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taught that self-indulgence is the better course. If we do what is needful, there is no doubt whatever that the free societies can co-exist competitively with the unfree Soviet society until kingdom come, or perhaps until the famous fundamental moral forces at last cause the iron Soviet system to alter in some way we cannot now foresee, or even to crack at some point we cannot now identify. But if we do not do what is needful, the trends herein described will continue and accelerate until history gives the final judgment; and this judgment is likely to be extremely distressing to old-fashioned friends of freedom.

FORESIGHT

"*. . . In five years it may be as dangerous to praise Stalin as it was to attack him two years ago. But I should not regard this as an advance. Nothing is gained by teaching the parrot a new word. What is needed is the right to print what one believes to be true, without having to fear bullying or blackmail from* any *side.*"

GEORGE ORWELL in *Polemic*, 1946

HINDSIGHT

"*If* L'Humanité *has taken so many precautions about making public the judgments of the XX Congress on Stalin, it is not only or mainly because its editors could interpret them as a disavowal of their past activity: it is, above all, because the cult of Stalin, practised for twenty years, has profound roots in a section of the French proletariat. The persistence of this cult and this myth must be explained by causes peculiar to France . . .; as for myself, I see the reason in the stagnation of our economy. . . .*"

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE in *Les Temps Modernes*, 1956

HINDSIGHT AND FORESIGHT

Place: East Berlin
Time: Mid-April 1956
Occasion: The All-German Forum of the "Free German Youth" leadership

Question by a Young Man: "*I have now read that Comrade Rajk in Hungary has been rehabilitated, because the evidence that led to his conviction was insufficient. But Rajk is no longer alive. Should not the death penalty be abolished, in order to make such incidents impossible?*"

Answer by Professor Gerhart Eisler, former Minister of Information in the East German government: "*That must be discussed at length, and I would not at this time answer in the negative.*"

Der Spiegel, April 18th, 1956

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After Stalin.... *A Symposium*

"A WORTHY PIONEER!"

I MUST admit that the extent of The Great Thaw has taken me by surprise—it's by no means the first time that the locomotive of history has run on a different timetable from the one I'd been using. I never expected to hear the top Soviet leaders denounce Stalin in the same terms the Trotskyists (among whom I was then to be counted) used in the thirties: dangerous madman, criminal bungler, betrayer of the revolution, etc. The polar rigours of Stalin's system have moderated since his death, until now the climate has warmed up to the level of Northern Greenland.

The essential question is whether this thaw is merely seasonal—a strategic retreat—or whether it is, so to speak, geological—a permanent shrinking of the Stalinist ice-cap. It is too soon, by ten or twenty years, to give even an approximate answer, but my guess is that the change is geological.

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*,* Hannah Arendt gave brilliant and persuasive expression to the theory that totalitarian systems like those of Hitler and Stalin cannot be modified in a more humane direction, that their long-range tendency (granting temporary retreats) must be toward an ever more extreme reduction of humanity to atomised, helpless, subhuman masses whose reflexes can be manipulated as freely as were those of Pavlov's dogs. Her theory emphasises the irrational, neurotic aspects of totalitarian behaviour, denying that it can be explained in terms of Marxian economic interest or even of a Machiavellian drive to power, and insisting that the paranoiac will to exterminate all obstacles in the way of reshaping the actual world in the form of a monstrous and illusory ideal—even if the easily predictable result is ruinous, as in Stalin's decimation of his own military and industrial leaders just before the war, or in Hitler's terroristic policy in occupied Russia, which forced the population to become his enemies instead of his allies against the oppressive Stalin régime—that the free exercise of this will is more important to the totalitarian leaders than success, or even survival. This theory, I think, explains the actual behaviour of Hitler and Stalin better than the kind of rational and materialistic interpretations we are used to. However, like Marx, Miss Arendt is an enthusiastic generaliser, a system-builder, and she, too, believes in an inherent logic, a big basic pattern which cannot be violated. Although Hitlerism did perish only in the ruins of Germany, as her theory would suggest, it seems to me by no means sure that Khrushchev & Co. are fated either to resume the Stalinist road after a temporary retreat or else to go down in the flames of war or revolution.

A strong case can be made, historically, for the temporary-retreat thesis. The alternation of crisis and relaxation is striking in Soviet history: the rigours of War Communism finally producing the Kronstadt revolt, to which Lenin reacted with the NEP; Stalin replacing NEP, once he had consolidated his power, in 1929, with the First Five Year Plan

So many extraordinary things are happening in Russia today, that it seems impossible for one "explanation" to comprehend them. We have therefore asked seven writers, all of whom closely follow Soviet affairs, to point to what they regard as most significant. Biographical data for the contributors to this symposium may be found on page 3 of this issue.

* The British edition was published by Secker and Warburg under the title, *The Burden of Our Time.*

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and the forced collectivisation programme; his retreating in turn, when the severity of Plan and collectivisation had become unendurable, in 1932, with his "dizzy from success" speech; the "Indian Summer" of 1933–6, when the political climate grew milder, art and letters had a breathing spell, and the new, super-democratic "Constitution" was drafted by a committee headed by Bukharin; and then the Moscow Trials and the great purges bursting on the Soviet world like a thunderclap out of a clear blue sky, Bukharin and the majority of his fellow Constitution-drafters being executed as traitors. In Stalin's Russia it was always not only darkest before dawn but also lightest before sunset.

BUT the question is, precisely, whether Khrushchev's Russia is Stalin's Russia. Was Stalin, as Miss Arendt's theory implies, a normal expression of the Soviet system or was he a peculiar individual who cast his morbid shadow over a whole period of Russian history? Granted that his death found Russia in a severe crisis, compounded of the tough Zhdanov post-war domestic policies, the discontent of workers over the resumption of the pre-war guns-not-butter economic policy and of peasants over the attempt to still further extend State control over farming, the fears of the bureaucracy at the hints, in the last year of Stalin's life, of a new series of purges, and the rearming of the U.S.A. as a result of the Soviet-backed invasion of South Korea—granted this crisis, I think the reaction of Stalin's heirs has gone further than a mere strategic retreat. Some of their concessions were indeed comparable to the kind Stalin made when forced to: the easing of pressure on intellectuals and artists, the increase in consumer goods, the giving up of the unpopular super-collectives, the execution of the MVD head, Beria. But others have no parallel under Stalin: the public admission that the charges against the doctors in the "Kremlin poison plot," made in the last months of Stalin's life, were phoney; the softening of the labour-camp regimen and the release of many prisoners; the avoidance of wholesale bloodshed in dealing with the East German revolt; Khrushchev and his colleagues "going to Canossa"—i.e. travelling to Tito to apologise for Stalin's expulsion of the Yugoslavs from the Comitern.

Above all, there is the current full-dress attack on the Stalin myth. Had Khrushchev & Co. had merely in mind a temporary retreat, they would have made such concessions as they felt necessary without raising any general issues, which would only make it harder to reinstate the old system later on. Instead, they have launched a frontal attack on the ideological keystone of Stalinism, the Great Leader principle, and on the reputation of Stalin himself. In his speech to the Party congress (which has not yet been published, but of which the *New York Times* of March 17th last, via "diplomatic channels," gave a full report), Khrushchev said: "We never knew when we entered Stalin's presence whether we would come out alive; he kept us all in terror; no one knew upon whom the next blow would fall." Here, I think, is the nub of the matter. As Miss Arendt has observed, the totalitarian system means that the personal interests—and even the lives—of everyone right up to the very top of the pyramid may be sacrificed at any moment "for the good of the cause." But to endure such a system takes fanatics. Trotsky used to call Stalin the man of Thermidor; he was wrong, as speedily became apparent when Stalin, having exiled his great opponent, proceeded to put into effect Trotsky's basic programme of collectivisation and industrialisation; Stalin was a Jacobin like Trotsky, not a restorer of the old order. Only now has Thermidor come to the Bolshevik Revolution—and a very good thing, too.

AS BARRAS and his fellow members of the Directoire—another substitution of collective leadership, by the way, for the Great Leader—were scared for their own skins by the Jacobin proscriptions, as they were weary of bloodthirsty principles, monstrous idealisms, the boring repression in the name of revolutionary virtue of all human, lively instincts, and simply wanted a chance

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to enjoy their power safely, selfishly, and corruptly; so with Khrushchev and *his* Directoire. There is something touching about his ebullient public behaviour since Stalin died, his backslapping and joking with Western diplomats and reporters, his wearing of funny native hats on his Asiatic tour, his expansive vulgarity in the manner of a Chicago ward politician. He is like a boy let out of school; this is his real style—the coarse geniality of a *nouveau riche*—and this is the real style of his colleagues.

Totalitarianism bends human nature, puts a terrible strain on the normal, mediocre man. When the pressure is removed, when Robespierre, Hitler, Stalin die, then human nature springs back to its normal shape, which is perhaps not very inspiring but is preferable to the nightmare form given it by the totalitarians.

As for the future. So long as the essentials of Stalinism remain, there will be, of course, a possibility that another Great Leader will find them ready to his hand. To date, these essentials have not been touched. There is still only one party, and all candidates for election put forward the same programme. The trade unions are still organs of the State rather than independent representatives of the workers, strikes are still forbidden, and workers cannot shop around for the best wages and conditions. The peasants are still forcibly collectivised. Art and letters are still under the direct control of the political bureaucracy. The secret police still enjoy unlimited and undefined powers of arrest, and the right of every citizen to a public trial conducted according to a written code of law is still not recognised. The dilemma facing the Thermidoreans is that if they don't institute such reforms, a new Great Leader may take advantage of the system, as Stalin did; while if they do, the attempt to modulate away from totalitarianism may release such popular unrest as to give some aspiring Great Leader a chance to take over. It is not clear yet what the reaction has been to the first big step toward reform, the destruction of the Great Leader myth. When this is known, one can speculate on the probable effects of further advances toward the *status quo ante* 1917—the modest degree of freedom achieved under Czar Nicholas II and swept away by the Bolsheviks in the name of the socialist liberation of humanity. Meanwhile, one can only say to comrade Khrushchev, echoing Hamlet (and Marx): "Well said, old mole! Canst work i' the earth so fast? A worthy pioneer!"

Dwight Macdonald

NINE POINTS

1. In my opinion, the condemnation by the present Soviet rulers of certain aspects of Stalin's policy—in particular his methods of political control—is only a concession to the growing discontent of the mass of peasants and workers in the federated peoples of the Soviet Union. There is certainly a profound political crisis going on there which expresses the ever-growing contrast between the immense development of productive forces and the backward forms of a dictatorial state entirely inadequate to meet the needs of this society. It is, in short, a crisis of the totalitarian régime that affects its basic structure.

2. In meeting the crisis the Soviet rulers have used Stalin as a scapegoat. But the fundamental political problem which has given rise to this crisis in the Russian state can be solved neither by condemning the cult of personality, nor by posthumously rehabilitating thousands of innocent persons who had been "liquidated" as traitors and enemies of the people, nor even by abandoning the grosser forms of political and cultural oppression which were the rule in Stalin's day. These are palliatives without much real effect, even if they are presented with a great deal of demagogic skill. The anachronistic character of the Russian dictatorship will not be affected by a change from personal to collective rule. We must expect sooner or later to see further notable developments, for the crisis remains unresolved.

3. I do not think that the only legitimate form of government from a democratic point of view is the Western parliamentary form.

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I do not even think that it would be the best or the most appropriate alternative to the present Russian dictatorship. But I do think that no régime can deserve to be called democratic while it excludes the multiplicity of political tendencies, denies their right to free expression through the press and public meetings, their right to nominate the men they trust for elective positions. The pseudo-Marxist doctrine that there cannot be a divergence of opinion or a political choice where there is no longer a society divided into classes is a ridiculous sophism, all of whose terms are false. The "democratic" formulations of the Stalinist constitution of 1936 are rendered fictitious precisely by the compulsory absence of opposition newspapers in the country, of opposition groups within the Russian Communist Party, and of opposition lists in elections.

4. What we call divergencies, the Communists call deviations. But it is pointless to invoke the entire history of East and West in order to explain this difference in rhetoric and terminology. It is well known that differences of political language exist not only between West and East but even between citizens of the same town, according to their different ideas of politics or of the nature of society in general. Thus, as is well known, even for the Fascists in Italy and the Nazis in Germany, although they were "Westerners," opposition was treason and discussion was deviation, just as in the Catholic Church they are called heresy. Differences of political language, therefore, are not the product of racial or ethnic or climatic differences, but of the difference between a closed society and an open society. Naturally it is still an open question as to why closed societies prevail in certain territories and at certain epochs.

5. Russian civilisation is of a European and Christian type, even though fairly distinct from that of the West. In Russia the separation of church from state never came to pass. Even Ivan the Terrible knew that he must "not only hold the reins of power, but also save souls." Russia never had a scholastic philosophy nor a reformation nor a school of independent lay thought (it had neither a St. Thomas nor a Machiavelli nor a Galileo). There have been no communes nor free cities in Russia except in the small areas of the Baltic. Russia has never had a freely elected parliament or a parliamentary government (the Duma was only consultative), nor free trade unions, nor co-operatives administered by their own members. The Socialist movement was almost always clandestine. This tradition certainly makes it difficult for democratic forms to take root and flower; and what is difficult to understand is why a man typical of so backward a cultural situation, like Zhdanov, should have been accepted as a guide and censor by many Western writers and artists.

6. But all the same, nothing irritates me so much as the invokation of historical necessity in order to forgive everything afterwards. I do not believe in Fate, and still less in the fatalism of terror. I do not believe there are situations with only one way out. I do not believe in the sanctity of *faits accomplis*. If I admit that in certain circumstances terror is indispensable to the politics of tyranny, I deny that it is indispensable to its victims.

7. The fact that the Communists of the whole world believed at the time in Stalin's version of his purges and plots, just as today they believe in the official condemnation by Stalin's successors of those monstrous events, is one of the many irrefutable proofs that the Communists of the whole world are held in blind obedience by their masters in Moscow. The so-called "Italian type of Communism," which has been developed by the Italian Communist Party since the Liberation, and of which the merits are attributed to Palmiro Togliatti, seems to contradict this bald assertion, but it does so only in appearance. It is enough to remember that the fate of individual European countries after the Liberation was agreed to at Yalta and Potsdam by the Four Great Powers. Among other Western European countries, Italy was at that time abandoned by Stalin to Western influence in exchange for the indifference of Churchill and Roosevelt to the fate of the Eastern European countries. The Italian and

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French Communist Parties had to make the best of a bad job; every move to do otherwise (the so-called "Greek alternative") was swiftly repressed on orders from Moscow, just as the rebel Markos was sent by Moscow to Siberia. In effect, the "Italian type of Communism" was also a Stalinist type.

8. Many reports give the impression that there is at present an internal *détente* in Russia, but it would probably be premature to assert that a new political phase is opening. The decisive change can only come about when an important political disagreement within the collective leadership is made publicly known and subjected to discussion in the Communist press, before being resolved in an organ of Party or state, and without the minority being threatened with extermination.

9. The enormous area which appears coloured pink in the world maps used at election time by pro-Communist parties, with its thousand million inhabitants and more, is a childish game, a typical survival of the Stalinist era. The differences and contradictions among the "people's democracies" of Europe, and between them and their more distant "sister" countries toward the East, are no less profound than those among the countries of the Western hemisphere. It is not yet possible to foresee how far the Soviet thaw and the international *détente* will allow individual countries of the two world blocs to recover their independence of action, but one may feel bound to assert that such a recovery is most desirable in the interest of peace and democracy.

Ignazio Silone

OF WORDS AND THINGS

"I can see many things far off, but many things that are close at hand I cannot see."
the Wizard Gandalf, in
J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Two Towers*

THE American jurist, Oliver Wendell Holmes, once said that "we need to think things instead of words." The advice is apt for those of us who try to understand the evolution of Communism. "Communism" is a word. As such it has not changed in one syllable or letter since the Communist Manifesto of 1847. But what is the thing itself? It was one thing in Russia in 1919. It was not quite the same thing in Russia in 1928. It was something else again in 1949. Is it what Lenin said it was, what Trotsky said it was, what Stalin said it was, or what Khrushchev says it is? Is it the same in China as in Russia, in Russia as in Yugoslavia? How much sameness must things have before you can say they are the same? How much difference before you can say they are different?

The point is that the use of an immutable word tends to mislead us by disguising change. If we follow Justice Holmes's advice, then we find ourselves thinking about a number of rather unstable, fluid, constantly evolving doctrines and social systems, having more or less in common, that all say they represent "Communism."

There has, inevitably, been a continuation of change in the Russian Communist system during the years since Stalin's death, just as before. I see no reason for particular concern over whether this has affected the ultimate objective of the Kremlin. Presumably that objective remains and will continue essentially the same. Ultimate objectives, however, exist only in the imagination. What counts is what a power does in order to achieve its objectives. Means should concern us more than ends.

I cannot quarrel with the statement that the ultimate objective of the Communist leaders is a Communist world. I would expect it to be. Our own objective is a free and democratic world. We have never disguised this, felt ashamed of it, or regarded it as sinister. Since we have never contemplated its achievement except by the voluntary consent of mankind, no one can properly complain of it. By the same logic, I would not deny the right of the Communist leaders to seek the voluntary allegiance of mankind by persuasion. This is not because I do not think their system false and nefarious. It is because I believe in applying to the power of speech,

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within broad limits, the principle that the power to do right necessarily embraces the power to do wrong. I share the faith that in a free market truth will ultimately have the advantage.

The real questions to ask are: whether it is still the policy of the Kremlin, as it appeared to be under Stalin, to impose Communism on others even, if necessary, by military methods; whether it is still the policy of the Kremlin to promote subversion in foreign countries and engage in other conspiratorial tactics that make a truly peaceful world-order impossible; or whether it is now or may become the Kremlin's policy to confine its methods to legitimate competition, economic or diplomatic, and persuasion—whether it does or does not intend to abide by the rules that must necessarily govern any peaceable family of nations.

Let me suggest answers to some of these questions.

It appears to me that our evolution and the evolution of our Communist antagonists may be tending, over a long period, to reduce the difference between us. *Chacun prend à l'adversaire.* The historic trends of our times work on both sides. In addition, the pressure of the Communist challenge has made us less easy-going and therefore, in some senses, less liberal. We cannot, perhaps, afford as much freedom for the individual. Thus we have had to impose increased requirements of military service; and we have, occasionally, felt ourselves obliged to deal with the menace of internal subversion and espionage by establishing illiberal restrictions. At the same time, the Communists have found, since Stalin (probably earlier), that by appearing more liberal and peaceable to the outside world they invest their system with some of the natural appeal which ours has traditionally had. This impels them to imitate us.

The outlook seems hopeful to me in the degree to which these convergent changes take place more in them than in us. It seems dark to the extent that they take place more in us. But the convergence in itself is a good thing if it reduces the danger of thermonuclear war.

One has the impression that hatred of Stalin and his work has, today, created a degree of unity among his successors that we had not anticipated. The common fear in which they lived for years under the tyranny of the old man may have given them a bond of comradeship for the time being. They may be as one in their present desire not to have any repetition of Stalinism. This would naturally drive them in the direction of some liberalisation, since there must be room for an essential minimum of diversity and accommodation where you have a corporate leadership, especially if it represents a revulsion against terrorism.

Still, I do not think that this kind of collective leadership in an authoritarian state has any more stability than that of the two triumvirates which briefly ruled Rome in the first century B.C.: that of Julius Cæsar, Pompeius, and Crassus; later that of Octavian, Marcus Antonius, and Lepidus. Such leadership may endure for a few years, perhaps even a decade or more; but the balance of power among the leaders is too precarious, the danger each represents to the other is too great, and the consequent temptation of each to grasp any opportunity for eliminating the others is too strong. I would expect a single ruler, another Stalin or an Augustus, to emerge sooner or later. The long history of government in the Soviet Union, if it proves to have a long history, might be rather similar to that of the Roman Empire.

This suggests, accurately, that I have no great hopes for the long-range future of any present liberalising tendencies in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the militant character of the Communist movement may be expected to lessen with the passing decades. Time is a great moderator. Cf. the history of Islam.

Shortening the range of speculation and becoming more specific, I do see some changes which we should welcome. Stalin, one suspects, was inadequately impressed with the effect of the new weapons on warfare. The present leadership have learned for themselves how big a hole one hydrogen bomb can make. They have probably grasped the

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fact that a few such bombs, the development of which Marx and Lenin had not foreseen, could also make a considerable rent in any social fabric, including their own. This may have made military risks less attractive to them, at least for the present. If our Western capacity for defence and retaliation should decline, however, the use of military means might regain its appeal for the Kremlin.

No modern ruler, within broad limits of sanity, prefers military means when others appear to have a good chance of gaining him his objectives. The Russians are traditionally cautious and defensive. The more confidence they have in their present political methods and the use to which they can put their expanding economic power abroad, the less temptation they will be under to resort to military aggression or military threats. At the moment, they seem to have such confidence. This is a mixed blessing.

To conclude: I suspect that the internal situation in the Soviet Union is less stable than it appears to be. The less stable it is, the less predictable. I feel quite sure that the present international situation is also unstable. All I can see, therefore, is that things will continue to change. Perhaps the changes will not be catastrophic. It is possible that the free world will achieve ever greater unity. The chief hope, and I do not rule it out, is of a mutual accommodation—based on our own united strength, cultural and physical, and a determination of both sides to control war—that might carry us safely through the immediate future into an unknown beyond.

Louis J. Halle

THE PLEASURES OF NOT BEING STALINIST

TWO things seem to me of very great importance when trying to appreciate the change of mood in Russia. One can be seen from outside the Soviet Union, the other only from the inside. The first is the way the current leaders, who rose to power as Stalin's chosen slave drivers and executioners, are positively revelling in their new freedom: they are children let out of school; or they are the wartime chiefs-of-staff scampering down the corridors of the War Cabinet offices when Mr. Churchill has at last gone to bed. Many have commented on Mr. Malenkov's extreme geniality and the way in which, with no training for the job at all, this deadly, complicated, and utterly ruthless killer outdid the most gifted vote-catchers of the Western democracies in kissing babies and stealing silly hearts. The conclusion from this, as a rule, was that Mr. Malenkov must be a very clever man, which we knew already, and that his amiable and almost diffident demagogy was calculated down to the last twinkle in those strange and often weary eyes. Of course the whole performance was calculated: the Russian leadership is trying to sell itself to the West—just as it is trying to sell itself to the Russians. What else? But nobody who stood by Mr. Malenkov, talked to him, then watched him, at one of the official receptions could be in the slightest doubt that he was enjoying every minute of it, every new contact with strange creatures he had never met before, and, on a more imperial level, as pleased as punch with himself for the virtuosity and grace with which he was in fact projecting himself, and the Soviet Union, and beating the Westerners at their own game—a far more amusing and entertaining game than any he had played before.

Perhaps people were misled by thinking of Mr. Malenkov as a unique apparition. He is far from unique in this sense. He is merely more imaginative and polished. I have been able to watch his colleagues a good deal during the past year: first in Belgrade, then in Geneva, then in Moscow itself. And, of course, through the newspapers, in India (where, contrary to popular Western belief, Messrs. Khrushchev and Bulganin were more concerned with taking China down a peg or two in Asia than in actively undermining Britain and America). The first sharp impression of high-spirited enjoyment, of

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liberation, immediately produced in Belgrade, has steadily persisted—though in London it was muted for a variety of reasons. There is a strong element of *Schadenfreude* too, especially on the part of Mr. Khrushchev. The state banquet for Dr. Adenauer in St. George's Hall in the Kremlin was a good example of this. Across the top of the hall ran a high table roped off from the main body, and along one side of this table the assembled Presidium sat with the West Germans, eating and toasting away under the eyes of diplomats and journalists and distinguished Soviet citizens (who thought it vulgar to watch), to make a scene not paralleled since the days of Louis XIV. Mr. K's delight in this performance, and in being able to chaff and tease and bully his West German visitors in full public view in the heart of the Kremlin, was irrepressible—for obvious reasons. His colleagues were equally pleased, but managed to restrain their manners.

This *Schadenfreude* is only a small element in the general sense of delight at being rid of Stalin and his ways. A sense of delight which must run very deep. The great leader's "closest colleagues" are not, if they can help it, going to surrender their new freedom to anybody—certainly not to any single one of themselves.

THE other thing which seems to me of special importance is the way in which the Soviet people, and especially the Soviet intelligentsia, is taking the genuineness of the change of mood for granted. These people are not simpletons, and they have had promises before. But when I was in Russia last autumn I found no suggestion anywhere of doubt about the reality of the existing gains—though a great deal of scepticism about the ability of the new leadership to develop the country on new lines as fast as everybody wanted, in face of obstruction from the vested interests of the immense state machine—the old Russian cry. This was at a time when a great many Western commentators were talking about the reversion to Stalinism and the cold war, as well as (slightly illogically) frightening themselves with stories of a new Leninist revival. There had been a good deal of Party activity against writers who had allowed themselves to be carried away by the Great Thaw. Mr. Surkov was in the ascendant in the Writers' Union. From the outside, indeed, there was every excuse for imagining that a "reaction" might be setting in. I had my own reasons for believing that nothing of the kind was happening, but these were not strong enough to set up against accumulating evidence pointing the other way. In Moscow all this evidence fell to pieces. Writers, intelligentsia, articulate citizens of all kinds paid no attention to it at all. They were, indeed, oblivious of it: things were moving in a certain direction, and so they would continue to move: it was simply a question of ways and means. The Government had to keep control somehow, and keeping control of an earthquake is not easy: hence the occasional stridencies and "Zhdanovist" cries. The general mood of confidence was impressive, and to one who had been used to living in a Russia where nobody dared to talk to anybody (I mean to anybody outside the immediate circle of intimates, not only to foreigners), at first almost alarmingly reckless.

I think the difference was this. In the West we were thinking of post-Stalin Russia in terms of liberalising and reactionary groups warring among themselves: now one seemed to be winning, now the other. We never had a clear idea as to which members of the higher leadership belonged to which group, but we took it for granted that the groups existed. Inside the Soviet Union this view never presented itself: the move away from Stalinism (or from Beria, as it was still publicly called last autumn) was taken for granted not only as natural but also as inevitable: the how and why was simply a question of reorganisation—in the eyes of the ordinary intelligent Russian, of sorting out the "bureaucrats"; in the eyes of the more sophisticated, of sorting out the peasants, and getting agriculture working properly. And so it has gone on.

I have no idea where it is leading or how

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it will end. There are so many conflicting forces at work. As for the Russians, it seems to me that they are not yet even thinking about where it will end. Movement is all; and in a country where there has been no movement to speak of for two or three decades, this is understandable. Certainly the Russians are not going to transform themselves into a Parliamentary democracy. No less certainly the famous Leninist revival is for the time being concerned far more with providing the current leadership with a moral authority beyond and above itself—which otherwise it totally lacks—than with any new revolutionary zeal.

Edward Crankshaw

BENEATH THE PARTY LINE

COMMUNIST attacks on Stalin's reputation began immediately after his death and have recently increased notably in intensity. They have been accompanied by some degree of concession to the Soviet peoples. Those who infer "profound and wide-reaching shifts in social and political life in Russia" opening up "long-range perspectives" of a "more peaceful, more liberal Russia" should read, or re-read, the six Conclusions of the Party's basic orientation course in Communism. True, the *Short Course in the History of the CPSU* is due for revision. It has stood unchanged for seventeen years, but the philosophy of each of its chief Conclusions is older than the Revolution.

The revision that has been promised can be expected to diminish Stalin's rôle, well known to have been exaggerated, and, particularly if it comes soon, to emphasise collective leadership as opposed to the cult of the individual. After all, the latter is not in accordance with the doctrines of historical materialism, and so violates one aspect of Communist theory. There is no reason to hope, however, that the six chief Conclusions which are drawn from the historical path traversed by the Bolshevik Party will be altered, for there is not the slightest indication that Stalin as a theoretician is held to have sinned against any of the six. In fact, our limited knowledge of what has really happened seems to uphold Stalin in his contributions to Party theory and doctrine.

The third Conclusion states the historical necessity of the one-party system, and the fourth says that the Party, which in Russia therefore is Government and the State, cannot function without the internal purge. Although we do not have the full text of Khrushchev's long speech of sensational condemnation, such evidence as we have does not condemn the Party purge as an institution, but rather the manner in which Stalin went about it and the judgment exercised in some cases. There is no reason to believe that the Party will abandon a feature which has contributed so much towards its monolithic character and its discipline. Lenin has thoroughly taught the Bolsheviks not to tolerate dissidents within their ranks. He has also taught them intolerance towards non-Bolshevik political activity. There is no room for political power outside the Party, and in Russia all power and influence have political overtones.

The second Conclusion is that the Party cannot orient itself, cannot understand what is happening, or plan the course of Government and State without the continual guidance of the "science" of Marxism-Leninism, which is defined as not a dogma, but a continually developing and self-perfecting guide to action. This, in so many words, was Lenin's guiding star.

The outbursts against Stalin are in strict accord with the fifth Conclusion, which states that the Party should never become self-satisfied, but should learn by its mistakes through the processes of criticism and self-criticism. The sixth Conclusion is that the Party should always remain in close and sympathetic contact with the masses. Here the extremity of some of Stalin's methods may be held to have been at fault, but not his political aims, and it is not likely that any revision of the basic text will omit his vivid comparison of the Party's strength with that

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of Antæus, which was maintained only by contact with the earth that gave him birth. To deny the desirability of this would be like repudiating mother.

SO FAR, all of these Conclusions are guides to action for maintaining the strength and power of the Party. The remaining Conclusion, which is presented as essential to the Party's well-being, is the one that most vitally concerns the West. It is well worth memorising:

> *The history of the Party teaches us, first of all, that the victory of the proletarian revolution, the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is impossible without a revolutionary party of the proletariat, a party free from opportunism, irreconcilable towards compromisers and capitulators, and revolutionary in its attitude towards the bourgeoisie and its state powers.*

Here, in the Communist-led, over-simplified class struggle, is the real source of the difficulties between East and West. It is made clear elsewhere that revolution does not mean evolution but means just what it says, and opportunists, compromisers, and capitulators are those who believe in anything other than temporary, tactical adjustments with us, who are, in one form or another, the bourgeoisie, and with our state power, which is necessary to our freedoms and our way of life.

In comparison with the force of this orientation, the extent to which others than Stalin are responsible for what is now laid at his door, the questions of whether or not there is a hidden struggle for power in the Party or concessions to the Soviet peoples and a lessening of internal oppression are almost beside the point in their effect on the West, except for human sympathy for the long-suffering subjects of Communist rule—the tolling of John Donne's bell—and in so far as the result is a weakening or strengthening of the Party (which is the State) that maintains such an orientation.

These six Conclusions are not Stalinist divergences, but are good Marxist-Leninist theory. They are not the Party line, but the very essence of Communism and the sources from which the Party line, with all its opportunist shifts and turns, is drawn. From the Party's viewpoint they make sense, and they have put it and the Soviet Union where it is today. It is not likely that it will, in its own eyes, commit suicide by voluntarily relinquishing them, nor can it well do so and still remain Communist. Nor would relinquishment be as easy as changes in the Party line, for except for those items which affect only the Party itself, there is so deep a commitment by massive indoctrination of the Soviet peoples for so long, that the corresponding rewriting of history and of Marxism-Leninism would strain the ingenuity of even those who are so experienced in that dubious art. This commitment goes beyond the subtleties of doctrine, and may be said to involve the very heart of Communism.

It is obvious that we are co-existing with the Soviet Union when we are not engaged in a hot war with it. Neither side prefers a military solution. Although in my opinion the Party fears war even more than does the West, it would be the gravest folly for us to make a victorious war easy for our self-proclaimed enemies. It follows that the co-existence which seems to face us as long as the Communist Party remains Communist is far from a condition of peace. We can expect nothing other than that they, who say plainly that they are irreconcilable, will, with varying tempo, pursue their dynamic revolutionary attitude towards us and our state power wherever and whenever we are weak or let down our guard. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the current tempo is a sign that the Communist world is first of all trying to consolidate and build up its strength, at home as well as in the neutral or so-called colonial world, and secondly, making cautious but persistent efforts to lead us to substitute trust in an enemy for strength and steadfastness.

When the chief Conclusions of the Party history are revised in such a way as to recognise clearly the bourgeois Western "capital-

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ist" or "imperialist" world as other than an enemy, and when such a revision is used for indoctrination as widely and as intensively as the present version, the Western countries will have won the cold war. Khrushchev himself is authority for the fact that the Communist Party considers that that will be when shrimps have learned to whistle.

Leslie C. Stevens

GRASPING THE INITIATIVE

SINCE my knowledge of Russian Communism is limited to book-reading and I have never even visited the Soviet Union, it would be silly for me to pontificate about events since the death of Stalin, and even sillier to predict what is going to happen in Russia as the result of the Twentieth Congress. But there is one question to which it is the duty of British Socialists to find an answer. What should be the attitude of the Western Labour Movements to the new men in the Kremlin and the peace initiative they have launched with such spectacular success?

Some of my colleagues are suggesting that it is too early to formulate a new policy. If their advice is taken, we shall once again remain inactive and irresolute until the moment for decision has passed. Those who advise us to wait developments in Russia are not, as they imagine, postponing a decision, but making a bad decision. They are deciding to adopt the kind of neutral, wait-and-see policy which has so often in the past left the initiative to the Russians.

The one clear, indisputable fact about the year 1956 is that it provides the opportunity for new initiatives to those who will seize them. For ten years we have been waging political trench-warfare, in which the chances of manœuvre by either side were strictly limited. Now, as the result of the nuclear stalemate and the death of Stalin, the cold-war battlefield has been transformed into a field of diplomatic manœuvre. Here victory will go to those who decide their policies without waiting to see what the other side will do.

A Western initiative, however, must be based on *some* assumptions about the Communist bloc. Here are the assumptions I believe that Socialists should make. (1) If nuclear war is successfully avoided for the next twenty-five years, the balance of power will continue to shift—as it has been shifting since 1945—towards the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic. (2) Nothing except general war could preserve to the North Atlantic nations the virtual monopoly of power they have enjoyed since the Industrial Revolution—and have wasted on internecine wars. Now that, for reasons of self-preservation, general war has been excluded from Western policy, we must recognise that we shall never again be able to "negotiate from strength," i.e. to achieve our political ends by the diplomatic use of military superiority. (3) Because the new men in the Kremlin are aware of this shift of the balance of power and rightly credit it to Communist technological achievement, they are much more confident than the old Bolsheviks ever were that the future belongs to Communism. (4) Stalinism, by the brutality of its external policies and the insanity of its internal purges, weakened the Communist challenge. By forcing the world into competitive rearmament, it made the task of "containing" Communism relatively simple. Any liberalisation, therefore, which takes place inside the Communist states will increase both their internal strength and their chances of success if the cold war is resumed.

These assumptions will seem gloomy to anyone who believes that world peace can only be achieved by "defeating" or by "containing" Communism. I have never understood how a Socialist with any historical perspective can believe either. Communism, which began as a heresy inside the Labour Movements of the highly industrialised North Atlantic nations, has achieved power among the backward, non-European peoples and provided their small, educated élites with a ruthless method of telescoping into a generation the industrial development which

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took hundreds of years in the West. As a democratic Socialist, I would, of course, vastly prefer the industrialisation of a backward nation to take place under democratic forms of government. But if the alternatives are a Chiang Kai-shek régime or a Mao Tse-tung régime, I would certainly not be prepared to defend the use of military force to sustain the former, far less to restore it to power.

FROM these general reflections I draw five political conclusions.

(1) *Cold War.* Only when there is a clear threat of military aggression by the Communist powers can a Socialist accept as the basis of his policy the concept of Cold War—which ranges the Communist and non-Communist worlds against one another in a competitive test of strength. Such a clear threat *may* have existed in 1950. Since the death of Stalin and the nuclear stalemate, the threat has become remote, and the Socialist should therefore revert to his traditional opposition to an arms race and to the division of the world into strategic power blocs.

(2) *Armaments.* The military risk to the democracies inherent in agreed disarmament is now far less than the political and social penalties of a continued arms race. Socialists, therefore, should demand that the Western powers outbid the Russians in their proposals for disarmament, in particular in the field of conventional weapons, whose production prevents us from using our skilled manpower and plant to aid the underdeveloped territories. If there is no far-reaching disarmament agreement, Socialists should accept the need for a NATO "trip-rope" but urge drastic cuts in the size of NATO forces including the proposed German Army.

(3) *Europe.* We should seize the initiative by proposing the phased de-militarisation not only of Germany but of Western and Eastern Europe. We should, for instance, make it clear that we are prepared to see France and Western Germany withdraw from NATO if Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary are conceded the kind of independence Tito has obtained for Yugoslavia. Our long-term aim should be a United States of Europe, whose independence is guaranteed under a United Nations security pact by both Great Powers. Within this framework the unification of Germany and the drawing of its Eastern frontier should not present an insoluble problem.

(4) *Middle East and North Africa.* Instead of rebuking those Arab leaders who have refused to commit their countries to the Western defence system and are struggling to free their peoples from colonial status, we should encourage the formation of a Federation of Arab States, committed neither to the East nor to the West and free to sell its oil on purely commercial terms. We should make it clear to the Arab leaders that we are determined to guarantee the integrity of an Israel dedicated, like Switzerland, to positive neutrality.

(5) *Colonialism.* The Liberal and Labour Movements of the West have triumphantly falsified the predictions of Karl Marx. They have used the institutions of democracy to begin the job of resolving the inherent contradictions of capitalism, evening out the gross inequalities, and transforming the privileges of the bourgeoisie into rights of every citizen. All this, however, has been achieved within the framework of the highly industrialised nation state, and by a small group of powers with living standards fantastically better than those of Asia and Africa. Western Socialism will degenerate into a polite form of National Socialism unless we recognise the existence of an international class war, in which our white Labour Movements now share the privileges and display some of the prejudices of an exploiting class.

I conclude that our main danger is that we shall be so hypnotised by the growing power and self-confidence of the post-Stalin Communist world that we shall go on thinking in terms of Cold War and so concede the political initiative to the new men in the Kremlin. In that case their victory is certain. The main task of democratic Socialism in the 1950's, therefore, is, first, to challenge the conscience of the Western peoples by exposing the facts of this international class war

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and, secondly, to show that, without Socialist planning and public ownership in each of our countries, aid to underdeveloped areas will remain an empty phrase and white ascendancy will be legitimately overthrown by war or Communist revolution.

R. H. S. Crossman

AN ASIAN VIEWPOINT

THE current phase of Soviet dynamics, whether in reality signifying a change or not, intrudes a disturbing element on the democratic horizons of Europe, Asia, and America. Certitude means strength. Because the impact of the new Soviet strategy on the thought of democratic countries and individuals is at the moment incalculable the dangers are intensified rather than diminished.

As far back as 1931 the Soviet theoretician, Dimitri Manuilsky, summed up the motivations behind a strategy such as this. In the light of the new developments in Russia, his comments are illuminating:

"War to the hilt between Communism and Capitalism is inevitable," writes Manuilsky. "Today, of course, we are not strong enough to attack. Our time will come in twenty or thirty years. The bourgeoisie will have to be put to sleep, so we will begin by launching the most spectacular peace movement on record. There will be electrifying overtones and unheard-of concessions. The capitalist countries, stupid and decadent, will rejoice to co-operate in their own destruction. They will leap at another chance to be friends. As soon as their guard is down we shall smash them with our clenched fist. . . ."

Thus clearly the purpose of the present Soviet strategy is to lull the free world into a false sense of security, taking the edge off the cold war and freezing it into immobility. Inevitably the repercussions on such defence arrangements as NATO, SEATO, and other collective security devices will be considerable. At the same time we can expect an offensive directed at undermining from within the constitutional structures of democratic countries. From co-existence as between nations to a popular front as between parties inside a country will be posed as a logical process.

Already the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, in its latest appraisal of the Indian political situation after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, has concluded that the Indian economy "is independent of foreign influences and domination." Modifications to its political thesis were submitted to the Palghat Congress of the Communist Party beginning on April 18th. The present stand constitutes a radical departure from the party's political policy enunciated only last June, for until a few months ago the Indian Communist Party leaders had held that while Nehru's foreign policy was "peaceful and progressive," his internal policies were essentially "reactionary." The Indian economy was then termed semi-colonial and characterised as not being wholly a "national bourgeois economy." A spokesman of the Central Committee explained that the immediate consequence of the Party's changed attitude towards Nehru's approach to the problem of building up the indigenous economy would be the abandonment of the present tactics of forming anti-Congress democratic fronts. In future Communists would form "democratic" fronts which would seek alignment with the "progressive" sections of the Congress. The local Communist Party of Telengana in Hyderabad, which was the first provincial unit to discuss the new line, concluded its eight-day session recently by giving overwhelming approval to the latest policy of "critical support" to the Nehru Government. Thus the Indian Communists are busy building their own Trojan horse. The historic Lenin–Roy compromise formula for China, adopted by the second Soviet Congress in 1920, finds an echo in the disingenuous Palghat resolution.

BOTH the area and climate of the cold war must intensify and increase. In Asia, as the results of the recent general elections in

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Ceylon prove, the fever of neutralism or of non-alignment with the power blocs is growing. Although the electoral results in Ceylon were influenced primarily by domestic issues, the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (People's United Front) headed by the new Prime Minister, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, had non-alignment as one of its major planks in its political programme. Unlike India's Nehru, Ceylon's Sir John Kotelawala, while willing to trade with the Communist countries, was unwilling to have any international or political association with them. Mr. Bandaranaike is likely to reverse this policy to the point of being friendly with both power blocs. Thus Ceylon's alignment with India on the plane of international policy extends, in Nehru's words, "the area of peace."

Nehru himself in a recent interview to the American press magnate, Mr. William Randolph Hearst, Jr., remarked that the Soviet leaders now recognised the fact that they could no longer hope to impose Communism on the entire world and that is why they were changing the basic Soviet policy. In the Indian Prime Minister's opinion two major factors would end the cold war, the first being the mass destructive power of nuclear weapons and the second being the narrowing East-West economic gap. Nehru went on to say that the cold war now affecting the world will eventually end through processes of peaceful co-existence. In his view the new Soviet plan appeared to be based upon a more realistic appreciation of the present world situation and represented a significant process of adaptation and adjustment. In so far as any improved development in any country constituted a step towards the creation of conditions favourable to the pursuit of a policy of peaceful co-existence it deserved encouragement. Nehru expressed the hope that this development would lead to a further relaxation of tension in the world.

On the other hand the Soviet Vice-Premier, Anastas Mikoyan, at a press conference in New Delhi, was at some pains to explain that the 20th Soviet Communist Party Congress in Moscow did not try to destroy the Stalin legend but only criticised some of his actions. Stalin, Mikoyan explained, definitely "has a place in history" but "too many good things have been said about him and it is not necessary to say more." In other words, the Stalin legend was to be gently debunked. Mikoyan simultaneously maintained that the Communist Party Congress did not envisage any radical changes in Soviet policy since it was a routine Party Congress convened to review the internal and external situation and to decide on a course of action that was best suited for the future. What the Congress did was to give up the "cult of personality" and to follow the path of collective leadership. Mikoyan added that there was no change in the Soviet attitude towards the Cominform since the Kremlin saw no reason to dissolve that body. It was a matter for the Communist Parties outside the "socialistic countries" to decide whether they wanted to continue the membership of the Cominform or not. China, he said, was not a member of the Cominform. But the Kremlin has confounded Mikoyan by announcing the dissolution of the Cominform. Such gestures signify nothing more than a change in tactics, not long-term strategy as those realise who recall that the Comintern was dissolved in 1943. The Cominform was created in 1947. The new party line, Mikoyan went on to say, had nothing to do with Trotskyism. In other words, what Mikoyan wished to suggest was that there was a struggle on the principles of leadership as a result of which the Party came to the unanimous conclusion about the cult of personality. There were no attacks on Stalin at the Party Congress but there was criticism.

Mikoyan's statement is revealing since it reinforces the view that the Kremlin has not changed its basic objectives of policy. All that the new line indicates is a shift in emphasis. The Kremlin is playing an old game in a new way. It is zigzagging to its target.

Frank Moraes

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Patrick Leigh Fermor

Sounds of the Greek World

THE olive-groves of Amphissa, the terraces of corn and vine, are notes on the syrinx, the Pindus is a jangle of goat-bells and the single herdsman's pipe.

Arcadia is the double flute, Arachova the jingle of hammers on the strings of a dulcimer, Roumeli a klephtic song heckled by dogs and shrill whistles, Epirus the Pyrrhic stamp of the Tsámiko dance, the sigh of Dodonian holm-oaks and Acroceraunian thunder and rain.

The Meteora soar twisting to the sky as a Byzantine litany ascends in quarter-tones to the Christ Pantocrator across a cupola's concavity.

Mystra is a swoop of kestrels among cypress-trees, a neo-Platonic syllogism under provincial purple; Athos, the clatter of semantra from cape to cape, Sinai, a fanfare of rams' horns, Daphni, a doxology.

Constantinople is the Emperor's acclamation, a lament for the Fall, the wail of amané and the mewing of cats; Alexandria a creak of papyrus, the eleven-fold wake that follows a quinquireme, a Judæo-Ptolemaic bargain.

The Propontis is the combustion of Greek fire from the bronze beaks of galleys, the Symplegades the breaking of ships' timbers, Anatolia the epic of Digenis Akritas, Iconium the shock of Byzantine lances on the shields of the Sultan of Rum, Cæsarea the echo of Arian-fulminating anathema, Bithynia a prince's cheetah pursuing an antelope through flower-strewn meadows, Cappadocia the wheeling of wood-pigeons between monasteried cones, Trebizond a black Pontic gale from the Caucasus.

Crete is the rhyming of couplets to the three-stringed lyra, the bang of gunfire, the roar along canyons of a landslide unloosed by the leap of an ibex, a maze-muted minotaur's bellow, the brush of peacocks' feathers through blood-red columns. Apokoronas is the treading of grapes, Malevisi the grumble of must fermenting and Ida a shepherd's voice calling to the White Mountains.

Gavdopopoula is a wind called Euroclydon.

Eastern Macedonia is the pibroch of a shaggy bagpiper moccasined and cross-gartered in goathide, Western Macedonia a war-cry and the whisper of a snowfall.

Thrace is the beat of a drum.

THE Asian coasts are the poems of Anacreon; the Ægean, the songs of Alcæus and Sappho, an Æolian harp hung in a mastic-tree, a storm-drowned Gorgon's voice wailing for Alexander; the

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Cyclades, the lyre-strokes of dolphin-borne Arion and the prehistoric tap of Helladic hammers.

Ætolia is a scraping of cicadas, the Kravara a beggars' chorus, Euyrtania a drilling of crickets.

The Rhodope is the click of anemones opening, Acarnania the crackle of withering asphodels.

The Hellespont is the whips of Xerxes, the waves closing over the head of Leander; Lemnos, a carousing of Argonauts; Tenedos, a tall story on the way home from Troy.

CHIOS is a cakewalk on a cottage piano, Syra is Offenbach from a bandstand.

Hermoupolis is the *filique*.

Athens is a canticle of columns and a music-hall song, a jangle of trams, a political speech, the inaudible pæan of the Panathenaic hymn and the little owl hooting.

Psychiko is *la Tonquinoise*, Kephissia a soirée musicale with a background of *Yes, sir, that's my baby*; Leophoros Syngrou, an exhaust-pipe, Patisia a gear-change, New Phaleron a metrical hard-luck story to the accompaniment of bouzoukia, Old Phaleron a tango heard through convolvulus horns.

The Plaka is a drunken polyphony at four in the morning in praise of retsina and the tune of a musical-box perched on a photograph album of faded plum velvet with filigree clasps at five in the afternoon.

Omonia is an equivocal whisper, a boast about Brooklyn; Kolonaki, the rattle of ice-cubes and a radiogramophone, Maroussi a monologue.

Piræus is a hashish-smoking rubayat to the geometry of the butcher's dance and a ship's siren.

Hymettus is the hum of bees, Attica a footfall on pine-needles.

SALONICA is an argument over a bill of lading, a Ladino greeting outside a synagogue; Volo, the smack of backgammon counters, Patras, the grate of cranes unloading, Samos, the bubbling of a narghilé.

Kalamata is a heel slapped in the Romaïc dance.

Yanina is the clash of scimitars, the clink of silversmiths, Trikkala a stork's beak-rattling from a broken minaret, Paramythia a coppersmith's clank.

Navarino and Lepanto are the boom of cannon, Tripoli the crisscross of yataghans, Psara the smouldering of fire-ships, Hydra a shout in Albanian from the cross-trees of a brigantine, Arkadi the explosion of powder-kegs, Souli the reverberation of long-barrelled guns, Zalongo the sound of women singing that grows fainter by seconds.

Tyrnavos is the Priapic song of a phallophore, Mavrolevfi the ululation of ikon-bearing firewalkers.

Olympus is the sky's echo, Parnassus the rush of an eagle's wing.

Delphi is a mantic muttering through marble under mountains, the dying-away of a murmuring spring, Olympia the music of the spheres, Sparta an anvil's ring. Thebes a riddle, Mycenæ an axe falling, Ithaca an arrow's flight.

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KARYTAINA is the echo of Frankish horns blowing, the distant baying of Burgundian hounds. Saint Hilarion is a tournament and the ghost of a *chanson de geste*, Navpaktos a virelai, and Monemvasia the crash of a mangonel.

The shores of Cyprus are the doves of Aphrodite, the voices of Achæans landing, of Argives, Laconians, and Arcadians, the lutes of the Lusignan.

Nicosia is a slogan for Union, the sizzle of kebabs, the drip of HP sauce, the splutter of soda syphons, the hiss of a fuse; Kyrenia, a two-years-old rhumba, a sahib's guffaw, the limericks of remittance-men.

BASSAE and Sunium are the noise of the wind like panpipes through fluted pillars, Nemea the rumble of a column's collapse. Naoussa is the thud of a falling apple, Edessa a waterfall, Kavalla the drop of an amber bead. Metzovo is a burning pine-cone, Samarina a voice in Vlach, Avdela a stag's belling. Grammos, the breath of a hibernating bear, Tzoumerka a wolf's howl.

Delos is the birth-wail of Apollo, Paxos a voice crying for the death of Pan.

Andros is running water.

The Ionian scatters the sound of mandolines towards the sunset.

Corfu is the cirocco lifting the Doge's gonfalon, Zante is a guitar, Cephalonia a curse, Cythera the dip of an oar, Levkas the splash of a trident.

Chalcis is the flurry of the tide, Naxos, the boxwood click of a rosary muffled by a nun's skirt; Ossa is a giant's tread, Pelion the beat of centaurs through glades of chestnut, Tempe a susurrus of plane-trees, and Rhodes a flutter of moths.

Santorin zigzags to the sky at dawn like a lark singing but dies at sunset with the *Dies Iræ*. Komotini is a muezzin's call, Patmos the faraway trumpets of the Apocalypse.

The Dodecanese is a sea-song by twelve sponge-fishers, Antikythera a mermaid forsaken; Skopelos, a lobster's and Poros, a mock-turtle's song, Ægina a tambourine.

The Sporades are the sea's whisper through olive-trees.

THE Ambracian gulf is a lowland lament with brekekekex! from Preveza, koax! from Amphilochia and an answering koax! across the mountains from Missolonghi.

Thessaly is a scythe's blade through cornstalks.

Leonidion is a dialogue in Doric, Lemonadassos a mill-wheel grinding, the swing of a lantern through lemon-woods.

The Hebrus river is a song floating seawards, the Strouma a challenge, the Aliacmon a ravine's voice, Pamisos a lullaby, the Alphæus a clatter of pebbles, the Ladon a midsummer gasp under oleanders; the Acheron, blue-green thunder falling through forests. The winding Acheloös is a reeds' conspiracy, the call of a heron, the bittern's answer; the Eurotas is an elegy, the Louros a trout's ripple, the Spercheios a flutter of flag-leaves.

Larissa is a bray, Tinos a chime of bells, Avgo a seal's bark. Icaria a moan in a nightmare, Scyros an anchor's drop, Paros the sound of

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quarrying, Cnidus the chip of a chisel, Amorgos a stream under leaves, Thasos a nightingale, Seriphos the hiss of Medusa's head and the wind, Pholegandros a seagull's and Anaphe a swallow's cry, Siphnos a lyric, Samothrace a snore, Ios a soliloquy, Gavdos a sigh, and the Strophades, silence.

Methone is a fugue of cormorants through broken demilunes, Corone an amphora that holds the waves' fall captive.

Cape Tænarus is the squeak of bats in a cave that leads to Hades, Cape Malea a wrangle of tempest-haunting birds, the cries of drowning men. The Mani ascends in a shout for vengeance and dies in a dirge turned to stone.

THE seas of Greece are the Odyssey whose music we can never know: the limitless sweep and throb of prosody, the flux and reflux of hexameters scanned by winds and currents and accompanied, for its escort of accents,

for the fall of its dactyls
the calm of spondees
the run of tribrachs
the ambiguity of trochees
and the lash of anapæsts;
for the flexibility of accidence,
the congruence of syntax
and the confluence of its crasis;
for the fluctuating of enclitic and prolitic,
for the halt of cæsuræ and the flight of the digamma,
for the ruffle of hard and soft breathings,
for its liquid syllables and the collusion of diphthongs,
for the receding tide of proparoxytones
and the hollowness of perispomena stalactitic with subscripts,
for the inconsequence of anacolouthon,
the economy of synecdoche,
the compression of hendiadys
and the extravagance of its epithets,
for the embrace of zeugma,
for the abruptness of asyndeton
for the swell of hyperbole
and the challenge of apostrophe,
for the splash and the boom and the clamour and the echo and the murmur of onomatopæa

by the
islands and harbours and causeways and soundings and crescents of shingle, whirlpools and bays and lagoons and narrows and chasms and roadsteads, seismic upheavals of crags in the haze of meridian panic, sockets and smouldering circles of stone and dying volcanoes; islets lying in pale archipelagoes, gulfs, reefs and headlands, warrened with cavities, that end in a litter of rocks and spikes where the limestone goes dark at sunset; thunderbolt sea-marks scattered on the water, light in the reign of the Pleiades, slowly spinning the sea-sounds that sigh in the caves of solitary islands.

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Letter from Rome

The Italian Bureaucracy

THERE are offices in Rome in which diligent state employees spend their time reviewing the legality of every foodstuff allotment—sugar, fats, flour, and so on—that was granted during the last war throughout Italy. They search through mountains of paper. Every so often—to tell the truth, not infrequently—an irregularity is unearthed. As a result of the confusion of the war years, some wholesaler or shopkeeper had received more than his due and had paid a bit less. So a letter is immediately sent to the person involved, requesting him to hand over, within a certain number of days, the required sum of money. The sums, due to post-war devaluation, have become even more insignificant than they were originally. What is more, the request may come back because the person to whom it is addressed has died, left the country, landed in jail, or simply vanished.

The mills of the Italian state, like those of God, grind slowly but exceedingly fine, and not merely for the small sums which the Ministry of Finance must collect, but also for the small ones which it must pay out. For example, there is a bureau in Rome which busies itself with 4,000 unsettled claims of people who suffered damages in an earthquake that took place in Calabria and Sicily in December 1908. The people involved in this particular earthquake are by now almost all dead. The orphans rescued from the ruins by sailors of all nations are today elderly men and women with greying hair. The earthquake-proof buildings and huts which were constructed right after the calamity to shelter the homeless have been levelled to the ground by a war and by other earthquakes. Nevertheless, the work of settling the claims still goes forward—claims for sums which are now almost invisible, perhaps enough to buy a few meals.

It was only a few months ago that the municipality of Enna posted in its taxation office the following announcement: "For five days, starting with today, there will be on view the list of reimbursements to be paid to persons who suffered damages at the hands of the Bourbonic troops in Sicily in 1860." And the Attorney-General of the Court of Accounts, among other grave judicial matters, also occupies himself with the problem of the restitution to the Ministry of Defence of certain Wolsit bicycles which were distributed to army officers passing through Rome in the summer of 1943. Almost all of them have disappeared—destroyed in the bombardments, lost together with personal luggage in the chaos after the armistice of September 8th, 1943, or just stolen. Since each bicycle was worth about 1,500 lire, all together they represent an infinitesimal amount compared to other losses sustained by the armed forces during those months. Nevertheless, official notifications delivered *in person* by employees of the State Judiciary still hound those officers who cannot give documentary proof that they actually lost the bicycles, for each person (so the notification reads) "is obliged, according to Article 194 of the Royal Decree of May 25th, 1924, No. 827, to furnish evidence of having effected the restitution of the bicycle or to demonstrate that the damage caused by its loss is not due to him or, in any case, cannot be imputed to him."

SOME days ago an important functionary said to me: "Thank heaven for the barbarian invasions, for otherwise there still would exist, in some out-of-the-way nook, the Office for the Termination of the Affairs of

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the College of Vestal Virgins, or, more popularly and succinctly, O.T.A.C.V.V." In Rome there are many such spectral bureaux, administrative ghosts which dwell in the limbo between the living and the dead, historic museums in which are deposited the adventures, hopes, initiatives, and mistakes of the past decades. They are hard to ferret out and to designate correctly because they do not have signs on the doors of their offices, often are not listed in the telephone directory, and manage somehow never to call their existence to one's attention. Some of them exist only on paper; nevertheless they possess a state-appropriated budget and pay salaries. One runs into them by chance, making a mistake in the floor while on a visit or dialling the wrong number on the telephone, as happened to me a few weeks ago. I heard a thin, hesitant voice at the other end answer: "Association for Albanian Reclamation." Now with what possible sort of land reclamation in Albania could these clerks be occupying themselves?

The anxiety to invent something which will stave off destruction has in the past sharpened the ingenuity of many functionaries to whom a bureau in its death agony has been entrusted. Sometimes, it must be admitted, they have dreamed up useful occupations for the moribund. For instance, A.R.A.R., the state organisation which had to liquidate the war surpluses and shut up shop, has got to work in innumerable ways and lives off the fat of the land. The same is true of a certain "Central Egg Depot," established during the war and financed by a percentage from every egg sold on the open market; today it is actively engaged in affairs having to do with the commerce of cheese.

S.A.N.E., a corporation belonging to the state, undertakes legitimate enterprises of almost every description. The initials signify "Joint Stock Company for Eritrean Shipping," but the last ships under this corporation's management disappeared more than a decade ago, sunk in the Red Sea or rusting away in some tropical port. Yet the loss of any possible social reason for its existence has not at all dismayed its functionaries; as, indeed, it has not discouraged those in charge of C.I.T.A.O. or "The Italian Company for East African Tourism," which has entered the field of transportation. This bureau, so it seems, organised the influx of many pilgrims into Italy during the Holy Year. But what the C.I.A.A.O. or "Italian Company for East African Hotels" actually does, besides bringing its affairs to a close, one cannot possibly know.

One could recount by the hundreds, perhaps by the thousands, curious stories of this kind; every businessman who has dealings with the state can swell the saga. They are unquestionably ridiculous, yet they are also rather touching as mementoes of the past, examples of how the bureaucracy, mummified in another epoch and world, continues to defend the precision of its account-books, hounds the debtor, tracks down the creditor, and safeguards, under all and any circumstances, the state's interests. Moreover, they are ridiculous only because of two factors: the time consumed and the meagreness of the sums of money at stake. But the bureaucracy (like handicrafts) belongs to a world where time doesn't count; time is an element which does not cost anything, like the air, and which one can consume at will, taking, if necessary, ninety years to pay for the damages caused by the war of the Bourbons in Sicily. As for the smallness of the sums of money, this criticism is beside the point, for it assumes that every effort is worthy only when it produces a corresponding and adequate financial result: which is a raw, modern prejudice.

That the Italian bureaucracy (the bureaucratic organisation, that is, not the bureaucrats themselves, who are in large part restive under the restrictions which paralyse them) is still living in the age of its great-grandfathers, before the invention of the steam engine, can be demonstrated, if it were necessary to do so, in many other ways. There is the absolute unconcern about the number of people employed on a given job—just as masses of workers were hired at the end of the 18th century to construct almost any building. There is a certain indifference towards specialisation, with the result that the state's offices are packed with employees capable of doing everything in general and nothing in particular. Mechanisation is primitive, where it is not non-existent. Records of trials, depositions of witnesses, interrogations, and all similar proceedings in courts of law are taken down by hand. The typists of the Ministries — with exceptions, of course — pick at their machines

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with incredible slowness, using two fingers and making innumerable errors, like soldiers who have been assigned to office duty. Telephones are at a premium. Automobiles almost don't exist: the police are forced to give up trailing criminals when they board a taxi or get into their own autos, so that they are only successful fighting the underworld which travels on foot. The Italian state administration lacks mimeograph machines, rationalised filing systems, adding machines, tabulators, almost all of the modern aids to office efficiency.

EVERY régime rests on the soldiers and bureaucrats of the preceding one, on those people whom even Lenin found a use for by calling them "technicians." It was the functionaries trained in Veneto and Lombardy, in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and Sardinia, who built the administrative framework for the united Italy, not the revolutionists and the Garibaldians. It was the bureaucrats of Giolitti's government, not the *squadristi* of Fascism's initial period, who gave the Fascists the chance at the start to govern without serious damage and even with certain benefits to the country. Public works, aqueducts, and land reclamation plans were completed on the basis of projects and studies prepared long before by the old, serious bureaux. When Mussolini was finally able to take over the state's affairs, both peaceful and belligerent, with the men brought up and trained according to Fascist standards, Italy fell to pieces. Yet despite this, even after twenty years of Fascism, there still remained in the bureaucracy a remnant of its old tradition. There were men devoted to the state, sustained by a sense of duty, who somehow were able to put together an administration after the war. But these men are fast disappearing from public service; a good many of them have already retired on pensions. One wonders what will happen when the government must rely on the functionaries left over from the post-war period, the ones who came out of the Communist-dominated Committees of National Liberation, the purges, the disorder, and the electoral deals. Even if future Ministers were to be (this is purely hypothetical) well-trained, courageous men, conscious of the problems they face and in complete agreement on how they should be solved, yet they would lack technicians, experts, the needed bureaux and offices, facts and information, faithful and competent employees.

The employees of the Italian state now number about 1,100,000. But one cannot regard the army, the railroad employees, the teachers, and the magistrates and court functionaries as a part of the administrative structure. So the real bureaucracy, that which has purely administrative functions, reduces itself to little more than 250,000 employees. They are very few, when one thinks of the vast scope and complexity of the state's tasks, the control which it exercises directly over a good half of the country's economic life and indirectly over all the rest. At the same time, they are too many. Everywhere there is an unusable surplus of inferior men and a scarcity of well-qualified, competent, executive, specialised, and technical personnel. In the same Ministry that lacks trained workers of all categories, there are throngs of poorly paid clerks who manage miraculously to keep busy through the working-day. This strange disequilibrium is not a chance product but has been created on purpose by unequivocal regulations which have been in force for decades.

The outcome is this: in the executive positions, numbering about twenty-five thousand jobs, there is a chronic lack of from one-fifth to one-fourth of the incumbents, that is, about five to seven thousand unfilled posts. But a real scramble takes place to obtain the lower positions in the bureaucracy. Although on these jobs the salary is small, it is compensated for by the fact that the hours of work are short, there are no real responsibilities, and there is no danger of being discharged; and so one can go through life without glory and without hardships. A recent inquiry has shown that a large number of Italians desire just this sort of job, which promises a meagre but regular salary and a tiny pension until death. As a result, when a new examination is announced, candidates present themselves in embarrassing super-abundance. From 1945 to 1952, 50,300 positions for ordinary clerks have been competed for by 490,000 applicants. "On May 4th, 1950," Professor Di Marchi, who has published a study of this phase of the bureaucracy, informs us, "eleven positions for ushers in the Ministry of Finance were put up for competition. There were 5,939 applicants. It took almost five years to

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carry out the examinations and to process the various papers connected with them. The results were published in a pamphlet of the *Official State Gazette* which contained more than seventy pages and was put on sale at the price of four hundred lire. Perhaps there does not exist another institution in the entire world with ushers who have been so carefully selected."

This situation has been created, above all, because the state pays such low salaries that it does not encourage capable men to enter the public services. A young engineer starts his career at a salary of about 50,000 lire (about £28) a month. After working for thirty years, he may rise as high as 100,000 lire. Moreover, because of the way the bureaucracy is organised, the negligent clerk and the zealous clerk both can expect to reach, in the same number of years, the same salary and grade in the service. Understandably, energetic people prefer to get jobs in private business (or in state agencies which are run as though they were privately owned). Meanwhile, the old functionaries are retiring and the ranks are filling up with the inept and incapable, the bottom-drawer students and the graduates-by-a-miracle.

Anyone who did not know Italy might conclude that the situation was beyond redemption. Actually, as usually happens in Italy, even in the state's offices the day-to-day reality succeeds sometimes in imposing itself. There is always a small group of responsible, devoted, hard-working clerks who do what they can, who dig out, from the hidden recesses of the regulations that control their activities, that particular clause which allows them to function or, at least, does not block their path. These are the unknown heroes of the system. As in Africa there are guides who lead the novice through the mysterious and impenetrable jungle, prepare the ambush for him, and steady his rifle as he shoots the charging lion, so in Rome there exist guides to the bureaucracy, who, for a percentage of the sums involved, lead the inexpert through the petrified forest of the state's bureaux, along trails known only to them, right up to the desk at which the Right Man sits enthroned.

But of what use would it be to select the proper personnel, provide them with adequate salaries, with machines, filing systems, telephones, and efficient secretaries, if the work which they must do is futile, chaotic, and contradictory? If the laws and regulations which they must enforce are divorced from contemporary reality and harmful to public and private interests? And who can possibly know all of them? In Italy today one can make every conceivable kind of revolution—Communist, Fascist, Anarcho-Syndicalist—and put through all the reforms from Liberal to Socialist, without erecting a single barricade, without convoking a national assembly, without even disturbing Parliament: all one has to do is rummage through the legal warehouse, pick out the applicable laws—they are all there—and enforce them rigorously.

For example, merely the authorisations of the police for legitimate activities—activities which in other countries one undertakes in great part without asking anyone's permission — amount to about one hundred and fifty items. They are absolutely unknown to the public at large, which goes on about its business not even realising that it is violating a law. These include, for instance, authorisations from the police for all growers of tomatoes which are to be used for canning and authorisations for all persons who plant or till a vineyard; while any peasant who wants to chop down a dead olive-tree on his own property must make application by means of a notarised legal document to the Prefecture and the Inspectorate of Agriculture, wait for the visit of an agricultural expert, the verdict of a commission, and then, finally, the arrival of the authorisation.

It is practically impossible for any one functionary, even the best, to keep in mind all the legislation referring to the affairs that pass through his hands. The executive members and clerks of a single bureau of the Treasury must know, besides the specific laws and regulations, also the general instructions of the Ministry of the Treasury, which are contained in a volume of 1,477 pages, with five supplements amounting to 899 pages, plus five others of 160, 516, 200, 204, and 267—all making a grand total of 3,723 pages. The laws governing the administration of the state's patrimony and finances are also an unexplored and virgin forest. In reality, whenever there is an enterprise which will cost the state money, its control winds up inevitably in the hands of a functionary of

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the General Accounting Office or the Court of Accounts (Corte dei Conti), or both working together. Even the smallest of projects—the purchase of furniture or equipment, the transfer of a clerk, the inception of some insignificant work—passes through this bottleneck. Applications pile up in the corridors of the General Accounting Office: dust-laden barricades of paper which, apparently, nobody ever disturbs.

Between the budgetary approval of a given project and its actual initiation there intervenes, when all goes well, at least two years' time. Every sort of public works, from a small aqueduct to a grandiose bridge, from the repair of an alleyway to the erection of a retaining-wall to halt a landslide which is on the point of engulfing an entire town, must run a gamut of fourteen distant legal steps just to have its plan reviewed and authorised, and then a second phase of sixteen distant steps in order to actually set up the organisation which will accomplish the work. Each of these steps is, of course, accompanied by the inevitable orgy of legal documents and mercilessly long-drawn-out negotiations between various and often conflicting branches of the bureaucracy, each one greedily jealous of its rights and prerogatives.

As everyone knows, bureaucracy is one of the sicknesses of the modern world. But in Italy it has idiosyncratic aspects. To begin with, there is our invincible good nature, due to which the dunces pass the exams, fathers of families are never discharged, and the man who makes a mistake invariably goes unpunished. Then there is the chronic unemployment which afflicts the university and high-school graduates of Southern Italy, who flood into the Ministries. And, finally, there is our ancient way of thinking, which leads us to believe that we are doing a good and charitable work by distributing meagre wages to the throngs of the incompetent needy, instead of providing useful jobs for them. But these older attitudes are in conflict with newer ones. For not only does the bureaucracy hinder the work of the Italians; it actually suffocates it, condemning them to a poverty which they desire, for the first time in their history, to overcome and leave behind them.

Luigi Barzini Jr.

To Be

Still missing it though,
Though what none know.
Still journeying on:
On what commission?
Still hoping to be *There*
Ere we be anywhere
And waiting till an *Hour*
Our idleness empower:
For *Place* and *Hour* and *We*
We seek at most to be
Being a want all three
And indiscernibly.

I. A. Richards

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NOTES FROM A DIARY

Easter at Venice

Between the revelations of Khrushchev and Resurrection at Easter, from March 25th to April 1st, a meeting was organised at Venice by the *Société Européenne de la Culture*. It was held to discuss the project of a much larger gathering of intellectuals from the East and the West. At this preliminary meeting there were Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Vercors, from France; Mikhail Alpatov, Konstantin Fedin, Boris Polevoi, V. Volodine, from Russia; Carlo Levi, Guido Piovene, Ignazio Silone, from Italy; J. D. Bernal, Alan Pryce-Jones, and myself, from England; Mario Ristic, from Yugoslavia; Jaroslav Iwaszkiewicz from Poland.

The meeting turned out to resemble a montage. One felt that attitudes cut out of paper were related to one another by being stuck on a sheet of cardboard. But the glue was genuine and provided promise of more for the future: it was the little saving grace of goodwill and of desire to meet.

To extend the metaphor, the cardboard on which the differing paper attitudes was stuck was the *Société Européenne de la Culture* itself; and the S.E.C. is nothing less than its ebullient chief organiser, Professor Umberto Campagnolo. Professor Campagnolo believes that wherever two or three are gathered together on the terrain of the S.E.C. and under his ægis, all ideological pasts, all national interests are left outside the meeting, in the cloak-room.

The least adhesive member of the meeting was perhaps Jean-Paul Sartre who, though differently, goes round like Pascal, accompanied by a tame abyss held on a leash. To the distress of Professor Campagnolo who kept on reminding us that no one, as far as he was concerned, represented anything or came from anywhere, Sartre observed how impossible it is for Us to understand Them. We speak out of Our *embourgeoisement* that conditions all Our thoughts. "The morals and attitudes of the U.S.S.R. enter into the works of their writers, and we can't expect Them to understand Us, any more than We can understand Them. A truth is nothing in a vacuum. It exists within a context and to understand it one has to enter into that context. Only if one admits this can one begin to discuss the problems of universalism. Then we can inquire as to the circumstances in which a truth can enter into several contexts."

The Thaw

There was a good deal—coming mostly from the West—about the thaw. Merleau-Ponty thought the thaw might mean the abandonment of the position whereby every intellectual idea is decided by criteria of economics and geography. He thought that within Marxism there was the possibility of rehabilitating the inner autonomy of culture. The Yugoslav, Ristic, who claimed that everything he said was simply what the Russians ought to be saying—what they *would* be saying in a few months' time—addressed Sartre very directly: "You assume that every idea produced in a socialist country is within the Marxist ideology. Yet Chinese culture is more different from Russian than Russian from any European culture. Marxist ideology is in no way oriental ideology. One cannot identify culture and ideology. To do so is a misunderstanding of what is meant by culture, and of Marxism. Nothing in the circumstances obliges one Marxist to have the same view as another about Joyce." This suggests that the Titoist position might be the real midway between East and West, and that perhaps the ideological chopper of Sartre will be found to have gone the way of Stalin's bright axes.

Silone blows the gaff

After two days of looking across Campagnolo's round table (so wide, by the way, that it almost defeated its purpose by reminding one that the dividing world is also round), Silone launched forth into a speech dispelling every inhibiting ghost which, until then, had thickened the air. He challenged the right of the Russians to talk about the continuous development of contemporary Russian literature from Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy. "I think the breaking of the Russian

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tradition has taken place. The tradition of the defence of the poor against the police is broken. Today it is officially admitted that there have been murders, massacres, etc. I don't want to preach heroism. I simply want to state that there has been a break with tradition. None of the great suffering of the Russian people in this period has found any expression whatever; unless, indeed, there are manuscripts that have been destroyed. In place of the tradition there is a contemporary literature of edification—in forms suggested by propaganda."

The Russian Contribution

Professor J. D. Bernal—surely someone who has less excuse than the Russians for having denied or ignored the horrors of the past decade—answered Silone by saying that if a Russian of Silone's calibre had been present he would have been able to reply. One should not discuss the crimes of Stalin without bringing in the circumstance of Hitlerism. Fedin said that there had been a good deal of writing about the suffering in the Civil War. For the rest, the Russians talked ploddingly about social realism, writers being invited to write in forms that fulfilled social needs, and so on. They condemned Proust and Joyce as decadent: a triumphant vindication for Sartre of his thesis that one could not enter into their ideology. No one put the interesting question to them: Are the thousands of works, in all the arts, inspired by Stalin, considered today to be "realism" or "decadence"? The Russians quite refused to be provoked, and were, in general, very patient with Western ideas, trying to discuss them reasonably and sensibly. Beyond this, one had the impression that Fedin and Alpatov wanted to unfreeze but had been stuck up too long. The saddest impression of the conference was that made by Jaroslav Iwaszkiewicz, who said nothing that was not conformist. What would be interesting would be to see the young—the post-Stalin generation.

Outside the Meeting

Taking coffee with Fedin, Polevoy, and Volodine, I remarked that I did not feel specially optimistic about the economic future of a capitalist society. I found it difficult to believe that there would be no more slumps. To be in our kind of society was to be anxious, but I preferred anxiety which went with freedom to communal security with lack of freedom. They said that the term freedom was so "comparative" as to be meaningless. Individual freedom was an illusion. I said the events of the past few weeks showed that this was not the case. In a country like England where there was individual freedom there could not be a "cult of the individual" like Stalinism. To my surprise, Volodine answered: "Perhaps you are right. It is a fault of ours that we have not had a sufficient passion for individual initiative. But now we have this initiative, and there is a great release of the energies of independent individuals all over Russia."

We ought to go on meeting. As Silone observed: "Democratic culture is a permanent state of confrontation of different points of view." Wherever there is even a little good will and such a confrontation, a small amount of democracy already exists. One should be vigilant—in several directions.

Stephen Spender

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Men and Ideas

Manès Sperber: SIGMUND FREUD

TO THE formal logic which reassures itself by the equation: the not-understood = the incomprehensible, the logic of the dialectic, Marxist or psychoanalytical, replies: henceforth the meaning is revealed. Whoever has really understood cannot fail to agree; whoever does not agree, has not really understood; or is resisting the truth out of unconscious (or unavowable) motives. For formal logic, error is the result of an incomplete or accidentally distorted perception, or an imperfect application of the rules of sound judgment. For psycho-logic, error is a rejection of the truth, a repression, an obstinate and self-seeking denial.

The psychologist is implicated in every explanation he gives of Man. His situation before the object of his researches too often resembles that of a guardian whose prisoner has taken him captive. It is the inextricable confusion and promiscuity between subject and object which gives psychology its uncertain character and makes it now a therapeutic technique, now an art or an esoteric discipline, now a sectarian school, a philosophy of life, or a *mystique*. In the realm of physics, differences of opinion reflect differences of experimental knowledge; in interpretative psychology, they express the opposition of two consciousnesses, embodied in two psychologists. In the first case it is the laws of nature which are in question, in the second the psychologists themselves, their pasts and their passions.

The splendour of a work of art is quite compatible with the suffering of the artist, but the slavery of the psychologist to the universal human condition seems less in accordance with his liberating function. If a faith cannot save the one who preaches it, whom shall it save? But perhaps the apostle does not seek his own salvation, nor the psychologist his own equilibrium. "I am not really a man of science, not an observer, not an experimenter, and not a thinker. I am nothing but by temperament a *Conquistador*—an adventurer, if you want to translate the word —with the curiosity, the boldness and the tenacity that belongs to that type of being," Freud wrote, not without a touch of coquetry, to his friend Fliess. Nietzsche too would have been flattered by the title of conquistador, like Stendhal, or the predecessor of them all, La Rochefoucauld. Their *terra incognita*, conquered by discovery, was man, the most secret animal and the one most skilled in the defence of what he hides from himself. He must be stripped bare — "*entlarven*," Nietzsche says—unmasked. It is understandable that the author of *Human, All Too Human* should end by proclaiming that the will to power was the most imperative of virtues, indispensable for the realisation of the Superman. The conquering consciousness is the goal of all those who wish to dominate men's minds, and through them perhaps everything else.

BUT if the will to power explains a great deal, it is even more in need of explanation itself, like every excessive desire. The man who fears that he is an object for everyone else, experiences the need to degrade everyone else into an object for himself. It is

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only at this price, he feels, that he can become what he is: himself. Thus we find, at the basis of the will to power, the humiliation of being human and the further humiliation of not being what one wishes to appear. Humiliation, more than any other suffering or passion, leads to extremism. It suffices for destruction; but it must be surmounted before that creative energy can be liberated which de-activates the will to power and disavows it as a lost illusion. Only then can the great goal be discovered: to understand.

The adage: *si duo idem faciunt, non est idem*, and its inverted form: it is possible for two different acts to be identical, mark the point of departure for all depth psychology; the certainty that there are two forms of psychic being: true being and appearance. The latter is a function of the former and makes up a part of reality in the same degree that a lie is a characteristic expression of the person who resorts to it, and is, in general, more revealing than a truth. The pose, the mask, the borrowing gesture, fleeting as they may be, reveal what a man wishes to seem and by antithesis what he does not wish to be, therefore what he really is.

Now, appearance reflects being as the shadow reflects the body: the latter "casts" the shadow, but only in relation to the light which it is intercepting. The individual can only express himself in his relationships; outside of them, he is but a mute, incommunicable essence. Psychologists move from the shadow to the body and then to the light, in order to discover the relationships in which the personality is concretised, among them, notably, its relationship to itself, the form and the results of its introspection, the language, the signs, and the symbols which it employs in the single-voiced dialogues by which the I affirms its identity and its continuity. (In schizophrenia, the *voices* render this dialogue impossible, destroying the identity, and thus shattering the personality.)

When Montaigne set out to portray himself, he suspected that "*nous ne sommes que cérémonie*"—and he played a complicated game of shadows. They alone, in their multiplying flight, indicated the position and movements of a being which gives itself away in hints and reflections but refuses to allow itself to be taken a captive. The French moralists, who were the first modern psychologists, sought to transfix every characteristic attitude through the shadows which both betray and disfigure it. Rousseau, who puts Montaigne, and in fact all those who preceded him, "at the head of those falsely sincere men who wish to deceive while speaking truly," Rousseau, who is unquestionably the falsest and most sincere of all sincere men, is aware of the double game he is playing. "By delivering myself at once to the memory of the impression received and the present feeling, I will paint the state of my soul doubly, as it was at the moment of the event and at the moment when I described it." And memory, as servile as the retroactive laws of a totalitarian state, permits this extraordinary reconstruction based on innumerable *as ifs*, on a fiction in which reality becomes a function of appearance and the past becomes retroactively transformable at any moment.

After Rousseau, men knew that the "Who am I?" had to be answered, not by the portrayal of their being, but by the history of their becoming. Hegel, more strongly influenced in his youth by Rousseau than by any other modern thinker, understood this best. His philosophy of becoming inspired Marx's sociology of becoming. In the same way, there is a thread which links the author of the *Confessions*, through Dostoevsky, Charcot, and Nietzsche, to the founders of interpretative psychology, and there exists a profound relationship between the misery of Jean-Jacques and that anguish of the psychologist which his art sometimes compensates, whereas his science can only define it.

IF WE consider only the date of his birth (May 6th, 1856), the founder of psychoanalysis belongs to the single peaceful generation Europe has produced in two hundred years: the one which was born after 1848 and before 1870, whose youth and early maturity had already passed when 1914 came. In the realm of the spirit, in the sciences as well as the arts, none of the succeeding generations was to demonstrate as much boldness as these peaceful men, whose manner of life was bourgeois enough, and often marked by a facile conformism, but so many of whose actions prepared or accomplished a revolution in traditional habits of thought, research, and creation. The extraordinary rapidity of the economic evolution of this period offered the sons of the suddenly enriched bourgeoisie a chance to adopt a pseudo-aristocratic life-

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style; but it opened, to the talent and energy of the children of the petty bourgeoisie, a universe to discover and conquer.

In his origins, Freud was the son of a Jewish couple from Eastern Galicia in migration toward the West, driven by the desire to find a decent material existence at last—and even, if possible, wealth—and perhaps also by the hope of escaping from humiliation. Freiberg, in Moravia, where Amalia Nathanson, the second wife of Jacob Freud, gave birth to her eldest son, was only a halt on the road which finally led the family to Vienna. Their hopes were not realised, the elder Freud spent all his life always "hopefully expecting something to turn up." Poverty, which the subsidies granted by his mother's family rendered barely tolerable, haunted Sigmund's childhood and youth. Even after he had finished his studies he still needed help; it was given him by a colleague, Dr. Joseph Breuer, his friend and guide during the decisive years. "I have known defenceless poverty and I continue to fear it constantly," he could still write at forty-three.

The Hapsburg Empire had been declining for a long time, but in a sunset splendour. Its capital, a metropolis for a thousand years, seemed to promise everything to everyone: emancipation to the sons of peoples not so much oppressed as cheated, the rarest pleasures to the *bon vivants* of every province, and, to the ambitious, riches, reputation, and even an ascent to power. The young Freud was one of these ambitious ones according to his disciple Siegfried Bernfeld: "The childhood phantasies and the adolescent day dreams of Freud . . . do not foretell the future originator of psychoanalysis. They fit in general, a reformer, or a business executive. . . . [As a] child . . . [he] devoured Thiers' story of Napoleon's power and . . . identified himself with Marshal Masséna.* Twelve years old, he still thinks of himself as a candidate for cabinet rank and, as an adolescent, he plans to become a lawyer, and to go into politics. . . ."

His aspirations were commensurate with the humiliations he suffered. Vienna, in which Freud lived from his fourth year to 1938, the year in which, at the age of eighty-two, he was forced into exile, was the most anti-Semitic of all the great cities of the world. Hatred of the Jews operated there in a thousand ways, but with a sense of the opportune which never faltered: it was weak —almost non-existent—toward the strong, and strong, even violent, toward the weak. And there was none weaker than the Jew of Eastern Europe, engaged in his desperate hunt for daily bread, for fortune, or for great careers for his children. His utter poverty provoked contempt, his ambition fear, the success of his children envy, the strangeness of his customs and the obsessive fervour of his piety an unbearable disquietude. To him the petty bourgeois transferred his resentment against the rich native Jews of the fine districts, who would themselves have preferred that a more impassable obstacle than the Danube canal separated them from that Leopoldstadt in which the new arrivals from the East disembarked. Freud was to live for seventy-eight years in a city he never loved, often hated, and always despised. He wrote: "I hate Vienna with a positively personal hatred and, just the contrary of the giant Antaeus, I draw fresh strength whenever I remove my feet from the soil of the city which is my home."

Freud was a child of Leopoldstadt. One finds many references to his intimate life scattered throughout nearly all his writings; they are half-audible confessions; but nowhere does he let slip the secret of his Galician origin. The famous episode of his father's humiliation by an anti-Semite, who forced him to step off the sidewalk, is badly told by Freud, because he hides the fact that this incident took place in Galicia, where his father, on the Sabbath, still wore a *streimel*, a fur headpiece really ridiculous enough to be provocative, which the Polish nobles formerly imposed on the Jews. (The incident, meaningless for the father who was its victim, was serious in the eyes of the child; thenceforth he recognised no authority in this man who had not been able to defend himself against humiliation.)

The deracination of the immigrants, and the constant influence of the foreign universe

* The preference given to Masséna is traceable to double error: Freud thought Masséna had been born on May 6th, 1756, and therefore exactly a hundred years before himself—and that he was of Jewish origin as well. This quotation as well as several others are taken from Ernest Jones's *Sigmund Freud*. I shall also have occasion in this essay to quote from Freud's letters to Fliess, as given in *The Origins of Psychoanalysis*.

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in which the child slowly took root, made a rupture possible, if not necessary, and, it would seem, relatively easy: Freud abandoned the faith of his people. This rupture brought with it no emotional conflict: far from restraining his secular ambition, his family encouraged it, counting on great future successes, of which they were so much the more in need as his father remained decidedly incapable of succeeding. Besides, the birth of the child had been accompanied by signs which announced to the superstitious a dizzying career; he had come into the world with a thick head of hair. An old woman predicted that he would be a great man and a Viennese fortune-teller that he would be a Minister.

"NEITHER at that time [when he chose his profession], nor indeed in my later life, did I feel any particular predilection for the career of a physician," Freud says. And elsewhere: "After forty-one years of medical activity, my self-knowledge tells me that I have never really been a doctor in the proper sense. . . . I have no knowledge of having had in my early years any craving to help suffering humanity. . . . In my youth I felt an overpowering need to understand something of the riddles of the world in which we live and perhaps even to contribute something to their solution. The most hopeful means of achieving this end seemed to be to enrol myself in the medical faculty; but even then I experimented—unsuccessfully—with zoology and chemistry, till at last, under the influence of Brücke, the greatest authority who affected me more than any other in my whole life, I settled down to physiology, though in those days it was too narrowly restricted to histology. By that time I had already passed all my medical examinations; but I took no interest in anything to do with medicine till the teacher whom I so deeply respected warned me that in view of my restricted circumstances I could not possibly take up a theoretical career. Thus I passed from the histology of the nervous system to neuropathology and then, prompted by fresh influences, I began to be concerned with the neuroses."

These lines, which summarise the beginning of his scientific career, make it clear that the researches to which Freud devoted himself were meant, in the spirit of his masters, to lead to the definitive elimination of psychology in favour of physiology. "No other forces act in the organism but physical and chemical forces." This was the doctrine taught by the great physiological school of which Brücke, together with Du Bois-Reymond and Helmholtz, were the energetic representatives. This current of thought attracted the young Freud by its materialistic monism, which seemed the philosophy most apt to replace his lost religion, and also because physiology opened a horizon of extraordinary discoveries. For Freud dreamed of winning at one stroke, by a sensational discovery, fame, riches, and position. It is in his letters to Martha Bernays, his fiancée, that one can see most clearly the motives and ambitions of the future psychologist at the age of twenty-five to thirty.

Twice the physiologist seems on the point of succeeding gloriously, but does not. His second great chance comes when he begins to study the effects of cocaine. He takes it himself, and recommends it to all his friends, convinced that it can do no harm. A grave error, and one for which he was to be severely criticised. He recognised the analgesic effect of the drug, and probably also suspected its anæsthetic action, but it was a colleague whom he had kept informed of his researches, and who made use of cocaine in ophthalmological surgery, who got all the credit for discovering its medical use. A year before, at the age of twenty-seven, Freud had written to his fiancée: "I prefer to do without my ambition, make less noise in the world, and have less success rather than injure my nervous system." He suffered, as a matter of fact, from atrocious migraine and other nervous disorders. "For the rest of my time in the hospital I will live like the *Goys*, modestly . . . without striving after discoveries or reaching to the depths."

One of the reasons for which he was not to do so was that in Vienna even a banal university career was impossible for a Jew unless he had made incomparably greater efforts than the "*Goys*." Another reason was the friendship and influence of Joseph Breuer, and finally, in 1885, the trip to Paris. "I believe I am changing a great deal. Charcot, who is both one of the greatest of physicians and a man whose common sense is the order of genius (*ein genial nüchterner Mensch*) simply demolishes my views and

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aims. . . . When I go away from him I have no more wish to work at my own simple things. . . . Whether the seed will ever bring forth fruit I do not know; but what I certainly know is that no other human being has ever affected me in such a way."

In a lecture several months after his return to Vienna, Freud made himself the spokesman for Charcot's ideas, but most of his colleagues, and notably his chief, the formidable professor of psychiatry, Meynert, refused to consider seriously a psychogenetic etiology of hysteria. In the years that followed, Freud continued his neuropathological researches, meanwhile translating two books by Charcot and two others by Bernheim, whom he had visited at Nancy in order to study his technique of hypnosis.

Promoted to the rank of *privatdozent*, he married after an engagement which his material difficulties had notably prolonged, and finally established himself. The electrotherapy he used in the treatment of his patients disappointed him; for several years he attempted treatment by hypnotic suggestion, although he had been aware since 1882 of the cathartic method which Breuer, in treating the famous case of "Anna O," had almost involuntarily developed. As Ernest Jones justly remarks, no intuition seems to have intervened at this period in the very slow development of Freud's ideas. Later, after his self-analysis, he was carried forward as if by an irresistible stream, but meanwhile he went limping forward when he would have liked to fly. Already convinced of the psychogenesis of the maladies which occupied him, he nevertheless continued to seek a physiology of the soul, when what he needed in fact was a psychology of the body. It was also to defend himself against psychology that he turned to the sexualism which characterises his first explanations of neurotic phenomena; in spite of everything, he wished to find a purely somatic (organic and functional) cause for anxiety.

FREUD was to be a revolutionary in spite of himself. Morally severe, modest and even prudish, he was to see his name attached to the sexual emancipation which the turn of the last century heralded. There is indeed good reason to think that Freud remained chaste until his marriage—he was then thirty years old—that he was a husband of exemplary fidelity, and that he renounced all sexual life well before old age.

Freud knew the isolation which is reserved for one who is a revolutionary in spite of himself. Surrounded by an ever-increasing family, he sank into solitude; migraines tortured him, fits of depression overcame him, often his heart threatened to fail him. Weeks of feverish work alternated with periods in which he felt himself drained of all strength, of all hope. His material situation remained precarious. It was not until he was finally appointed a professor that patients began to come in numbers. (When the Emperor's Minister finally signed this promotion, it was thanks to the intervention of a well-connected patroness, and the decisive argument was her promise to secure a painting for a State museum.)

Here is the man at forty: a greying beard made him look more than his age, sometimes made him look old, but his eyes remained young, like his face, under an adolescent head of hair. "Well, I really am forty-four now, a rather shabby old Jew," he writes Fliess. "You know how limited my pleasures are: I must not smoke heavy cigars, alcohol does not mean anything to me, I have finished with begetting children, and I am cut off from contact with people."

Seven years before, he had published, in collaboration with Breuer, the *Studies in Hysteria*. Of the printing of eight hundred copies, one hundred and eighty remained unsold thirteen years later. He had just published *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the most brilliant of his works. Yet "not a leaf has stirred to indicate that the meaning of dreams meant anything to anyone. . . . I was intoxicated with the hope that it meant a step towards freedom and prosperity. The book's reception and the silence since, have once more destroyed any budding relationship with my environment."

IT WAS in one of his last letters to Fliess that Freud made this summing-up. For this extraordinary friendship was already undermined, soon nothing was to remain of it but bitterness. Time was to soften the bitterness, but all the years of a long life never succeeded in effacing it. Yet, shortly before the break, Freud had assured his friend that nothing could replace him, that without that "single public" Fliess represented for

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him, his labours would have neither a meaning nor a goal.

The importance to Freud of his friendship with Breuer was well known, but it is only now, thanks to the publication of a collection of his letters to Fliess, that we can appreciate the depth of the friendship, of the tragic intimacy that linked him, almost passionately, for fifteen years with this Berlin physician. Apart from his dreams which he relates in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and certain events of his inner life which he only mentions to explain the dreams, nothing like these letters gave any previous hint of what led Freud to psychoanalysis.

The nose and throat specialist Wilhelm Fliess, ambitious like his Viennese friend, a brilliant and stimulating conversationalist admired by his acquaintances, seemed marked for the greatest successes physiological research could offer. A lay mystic inspired by the school of Helmholtz, he sought, even within the narrow limits of the phenomena he was professionally concerned with, the key to the "enigmas of the universe." Having discovered what he called the "nasal reflex neurosis" and the innumerable symptoms which followed in its wake and which affected other organs, notably the stomach and the female genital organs, he proceeded to arrive, by a series of ever more audacious extensions and generalisations, at two fundamental conceptions: that of bisexuality as a characteristic of all organisms, and that of a periodicity which regulated all the actions of living creatures, even their sufferings, their illnesses, and their accidents from birth to death. To the end of his life Fliess remained convinced that the key to every mystery was contained in the two numbers 23 and 28 which governed his theory of periodicity. His calculations came to resemble more and more the mystic algebra of the Middle Ages.

It was largely to Fliess, whom he met through Breuer, that Freud owed the inspiration that led him to seek the source of neurosis in sexuality, which allowed him to explain these illnesses in terms of a purely physiological mechanism. Sexualism finds in the theory of bisexuality an indispensable and quite satisfying foundation. Freud was ready also to welcome the hypothesis of periodicity, which his friend considered the keystone of his whole "cosmic" biology, but his own experience supplied no confirmation of the theory. He was left what one might call conscience-stricken at this, and promised himself to do better. But when the rupture had reached the point of a search for avowable and therefore superficial motives, one of them was the absence of periodicity from the explanations Freud gave of hysteria.*

Another, probably decisive, reason for the quarrel was a terrible remark made by Fliess on the occasion of their last "congress": he accused Freud of finding in the cases he had analysed only what he had put there himself, and referred to him as a "*Gedankenleser*" (thought-reader) — an extremely pejorative term in the mouth of a Helmholtzian. The wound was all the more painful because Fliess must have been thinking of a phase in which Freud had gone dangerously astray precisely by projecting his own ideas on to his patients. And it was to his friend that Freud had first, honestly and courageously, admitted this setback, which threatened to put an end not only to his "expectation of eternal glory and certain riches" but to his whole career. The systematic error which led Freud astray for four years, up to the autumn of 1897, was rather more important and more meaningful than the rash generalisations of his work on cocaine. What was involved here was what Nietzsche calls the typical experience (*das typische Erlebnis*), which is made up, not of what happens to a man from the outside, but of the occurrence which is repeated, unconsciously "arranged" (Adler), each time he comes closest to his destiny. This experience recurs as long as he refuses to grasp the warning it constitutes.

For four years Freud induced his hysterical patients to tell a significant and always identical story: they had been the victims of rape committed by the father. He saw in this trauma the decisive cause of hysteria. "I believe this to be a momentous revelation, the discovery of a *caput Nili* of neuropathology," he said on May 2nd, 1896, in an address to the Society of Psychiatry and Neurology in Vienna. And he cited eighteen cases he had completely analysed. (The aged Krafft-Ebing, who presided over this meeting,

* Of the long dialogue which the correspondence between the two men constituted, one of the voices will never be heard—Fliess's letters were completely destroyed by Freud some time after the rupture.

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summed up his impression in one sentence: "It is a fairy tale told by a scientist.") That Freud sought the cause of hysteria in a trauma is to be explained partly by the influence of Charcot and partly by that of the mechanistic philosophy to which he remained faithful. No doubt his ever-present desire to make an absolutely sensational discovery had a hand in it too.

In an important letter of September 21st, 1897, he announced to Fliess his realisation of his mistake. "I no longer believe in my *neurotica*," he says, before going on to list the facts, notably the absence of any real therapeutic success, which had awakened his doubts and finally brought him to the conviction of his error. He had taken the fiction produced by his patients for real experiences dredged from their memories. And yet, neither in this letter nor elsewhere, neither at this time nor later, did he lay stress on the cardinal point, namely that it was he himself who had suggested to the hysterics the stories he later took as definitive proof for his etiology. So there was a rape, but the fathers of his patients had nothing to do with it. This rape was part of a therapy in which it was the past rather than the present which succumbed to the seduction of the analyst.

TO THE reasons already mentioned for the extreme interest Freud brought to sexual phenomena, another, more personal one must be added: the will to surmount his own prudery, which was the result of the particularly severe sexual morality prevalent in his original milieu. In the beginning, therefore, what was involved was an attempt at self-emancipation, all the more courageous because its effect would be to place him in opposition to his new milieu. But whence the fiction of the rape? Certainly all neurotics present themselves as victims. Push them a little and they will demonstrate that the road that links them to their past is a *via dolorosa.* They will assent with pleasure to the idea that they have been oppressed by those they loved, and from their very births. If, in the manner of literary creation, one condenses the innumerable little facts of this oppression, whether amorous or not, what emerges—in a parable that speaks the sexual jargon—is a rape. But what drove Freud to suggest just this parable? The irresistible force of the inspiration did not decrease, for even when Freud finally abandoned the theory of the violation of children by their father he merely reversed the same idea and found the Oedipus complex, the sexual desire which impels the child to appropriate one of the parents and kill the other. The only real, though banal, change lies elsewhere: in the distinction he was henceforth to make between the fiction and actual experience. But the number of actual experiences being practically infinite, even in the least active life, a selection must operate among the facts that "free association" brings to the surface. And this association is a good deal less free than the dream; so, after several sessions of therapeutic treatment, the clients of psychoanalysts have psychoanalytic dreams, the clients of Jungians have dreams in the mythic language of the collective unconscious, and those of Adlerians, while dreaming according to less rigid stereotypes, are no less complaisant toward their therapists. (Neurotic resistance may sometimes efface the memory of dreams, but it rarely prevents this curious adaptation.)

Once again Freud sought what he had already found, and ended by discovering it. His self-analysis, says his biographer, Ernest Jones, opened the way for him. But it was not in his own childhood that Freud found the Oedipus complex. What he found there was: the determining rôle that an old servant, as ugly as she was intelligent, had played in his life up to the age of two and a half, when she was arrested for theft and suddenly disappeared from it—a first rupture of very great importance; that he had been jealous of a brother born a year after him, who died a few months later; that his libido had been awakened toward his mother when, travelling with her, he once saw her nude (in speaking of the incident Freud employs the Latin words for mother and nude); that his father played no active rôle at all in his childhood; and finally that the son of his half-brother, a nephew who was a year older than his uncle, had been his "companion in crime" for the first two years of his life, before the family left Freiberg. "My nephew and younger brother determined not only the neurotic side of all my friendships, but also their depth." Elsewhere Freud recognised that he had always needed an intimate friend and an enemy to hate, the two sometimes being combined in one person.

In reading his letters it is easy enough to

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glimpse those factors in the past from which he tended to free himself, but what stands out most clearly, and in the most intimate passages, is his purposiveness, the image of the personality he wished to be, of the ambition which drove and tortured him. As soon as he is sure of being loved by the woman who was to be his wife, he confronts her with ultimatums each time he feels his power over her threatened. She must break with friends, with a brother. And when she plans to return to Vienna in order to lessen the financial burden on her mother, her furious fiancé reproaches her with being able to think of her mother when she should think only of him. "In that case," he writes, "you are my enemy. . . . If you do not surmount this obstacle we will break things off. If you do not love me enough to give up your family you deserve to lose me, to destroy my life. . . ."

The girl yielded adroitly. But the others, so many of his friends and collaborators, did not yield, and he treated them as enemies. His life was marked off by violent ruptures. Freud's self-analysis changed nothing, in spite of what Jones says. The latter provides the proof of this himself; for example, when he tells how Freud reproached Jung (in 1912) for not citing his name often enough, and how he reacted to the Swiss doctor's resistance by fainting. This obsession with priority expresses itself in an astonishing fashion in the confidences he makes to Fliess. "Moebius is the best mind among the neurologists; fortunately he is not on the track of sexuality. . . . I picked up a recent book of Janet's on hysteria and *idées fixes* with a beating heart, and laid it down again with my pulse returned to normal. He has no inkling of the clue." In the misunderstandings and conflicts which later provoked the secession of many of his famous disciples, Freud too often refused to admit someone else's priority with an idea. One of the incidents which preceded the end of his friendship with Fliess foreshadowed the conflicts to come: in 1900, during the meeting which was to be the last "congress" of the two friends, Freud told Fliess about his latest great discovery, bisexuality, and refused to admit that his friend had given him the idea, though Fliess had in fact advanced it to him several times in the last three years. It took the psychologist a week to realise that he had been the victim of an amnesia all the more strange because he had already, in his letters to Fliess, often spoken of bisexuality.

WHAT Freud discovered in his self-analysis was not, therefore, the Oedipus complex. It was, on the one hand, the persistent presence of the past which creates a tendency to reproduce certain childhood relationships—a discovery not at all new, but which Freud was the first to give its proper place in a framework of explanation; and, on the other hand, the possibility of exploring the dream as the most authentic expression of the whole man, of his conscious as well as his unconscious life. Although oneirocriticism is a very ancient practice, *The Interpretation of Dreams* must be recognised as an epochal work, one of the most original and fertile of contributions to modern psychology. Freud did not become acquainted with the many works devoted to the dream until after he had formed his own theory—here he really had no need of forerunners.*

All the elements of artistic creation are present in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. One constantly feels the presence of the author, even when it is not his own dreams that is the subject. The double nature of psychology, which is at once a science and a philosophic art, becomes palpable. All interpretation reveals itself as a structuring of *données* scattered in time and space, as an arrangement which by tendentious selection and

* His friends as well as his enemies have, on the other hand, too easily ignored what he owed, in nearly all the other elements of psychoanalysis, to both predecessors and contemporaries, notably to Herbart, the author of a large number of the fundamental concepts Freud made use of (among others, those of the pleasure-principle and repression); to E. von Hartmann, and still more to Griesinger, who from 1867 on gave greater importance to the unconscious in his psychiatry than to the content of consciousness itself; even to Meynert, with his theory of two Egos and of inhibition; to Breuer, Charcot, Forel, Lips, Fliess, and Janet, among others, and later to Bleuler, Jung, and Adler. If Freud was at first ignored and ridiculously underestimated by his colleagues, he was overestimated by those who, knowing psychology only through his writings, considered him the primary source and author of all its conquests.

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condensation permits a fusion of the discovered meaning and the imagined one.

Although Freud wished to prove that dreams always have a wish-fulfilling function, he did not ask them to demonstrate the permanence of the Oedipus complex or the incestuous wish. Yet one trait is common to all these dreams, his own as well as those of his patients; they express an inexorable jealousy, accompanied by an absolute will to eliminate the rival, and a resentment which forgives nothing. Even ambition, which is so frequent in Freud's dreams, is never defined solely in terms of a goal, but much more often as a function of the envy inspired by a more fortunate rival, and, in general, all those who seem to be successful. Indeed, in the immense casuistry of orthodox psychoanalysis the incestuous fixation rarely expresses itself in terms of a real attachment, but almost always as a more or less murderous impulse toward the always-present third member of the triangle. This can be easily explained: the neurotic is as incapable of love as he is of renouncing the love he expects from others. In his emotional bookkeeping, what he received is reckoned according to the measure of a god, what he himself offers according to the measure of a beggar, who, in giving very little, has given all. The lesson that emerges from all the dreams interpreted by Freud is that man is the obstacle to man. If one cannot eliminate his neighbour by transforming him into a loving slave, one should kill him. Let him who does not love me die! Let him die who is loved by the one who should love me!

FREUD was no more Oedipus in his dreams than in his childhood memories; he was Joseph, and he knew it—Joseph, the son of Jacob's second wife, for a long time the youngest son and his father's favourite; the dreamer who saw his brothers bowing before him, the sun, the moon, and the stars (his father, his mother, and their children) paying court to him; Joseph, who climbed to power in a strange country thanks to his power to interpret dreams; Joseph the chaste, exposed to seduction, who did not marry before thirty; Joseph who had been mortally threatened by the envy and jealousy of his brothers. Freud consciously identified himself with Joseph, yet wished to find the fundamental parable of man in the Oedipus legend, thus reducing the struggle between the generations, the sexes, the classes, even man's struggle against fate, to incestuous desire, and the revolt against oppressive authority to parricidal jealousy.

Oedipus would never have killed his father if the latter had not broken the bonds of vital solidarity between the generations. And Laius, who desired nothing so much as to have a son, condemned him to death precisely because he had been warned of the fate the gods had ordained for him. The tragedy is therefore a *tragedy of consciousness* in which each action *helps fate* to accomplish itself instead of averting it. The moral of the Sophoclean tragedy is that only moderation protects man from the gods. Every breach of human solidarity plays into the hands of the intriguing and vengeful gods. "Do not kill, for your victim may be your father, or your brother!" Every excess sets loose an infinite chain of more and more terrible excesses. No man is really a stranger, no god is really a friend.

It is obvious that the actions of Oedipus owe absolutely nothing to the complex named after him. On the other hand there is a profound affinity between the legends of Joseph and Oedipus. Both are, at the outset, the victims of an expulsion. Both reach the heights of power in a strange land, saving their new country; and their family, despite an original breach of solidarity. Joseph recognises his brothers, he humiliates them, but without destroying them; Oedipus can recognise neither his father nor his mother, and it is because of this that he becomes guilty of his crimes. The incest here is the result not of a libidinous fixation but, on the contrary, of complete alienation, of the absence of the natural ties which would have linked Jocasta and her son if she had been willing to face her destiny instead of avoiding it by an inhuman abandonment.

The attraction that the Oedipus legend, badly and flatly interpreted, held for Freud can be explained on at least four different levels: (1) All the determinants of the legend are concealed, and must be uncovered before the events become comprehensible; (2) The sexual theme is present in the form of an unconsciously incestuous marriage; (3) The murderous violence involved takes place within the family; (4) Each step of the tragedy is crime and punishment at the same

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time—there is no final expiation. And for Freud, neurosis is exactly that: frustration and satisfaction at the same time; sin and expiation, guilty desire and sense of guilt. In the circle of his actions the neurotic is as much in pursuit of the Erinnyes as he is pursued.

Freud states over and over that the Oedipus complex is the cornerstone (*Kernstueck*) of his theory of neurosis. The family is the focus of the violent feelings which link or split its members. Whether the psychic energy, the libido, becomes love avid of possession or hate avid of murder, the violence of the frustrated desire becomes a desire for violence ill repressed by the action of the reality-principle. And faced with a hostile world, all the desires are summed up in a single one: the nostalgia for the lost paradise, the return to the mother's womb which one should never have left. All extreme violence feeds the nostalgia for the void.

There are good reasons for thinking that incestuous relationships are considerably more frequent than the legal records indicate. But in the casuistry of psychoanalysis, although it is centred around the incestuous wish, one never finds cases of incest. On the other hand, among those who practise incest, the feeling of guilt is neither more marked nor more serious than among perverts. The fear of being compromised in the eyes of neighbours and of being punished by the law is real, but the tragic horror is absent. Similarly the parricide is not too rare a phenomenon. He generally defends himself by the same system of self-justification that operates in any other crime of passion. One finds as many repressions and inhibitions among the incestuous and among parricides as in other neurotics. There is nothing astonishing in this, since the persistence of the fixation on a parent is generally due more to fear of the future and the psychic inability to create a new relationship rather than the strength of the attachment to the past. Whatever the power of the latter, man is fundamentally *forward-looking* and his actions take place in a framework which couples causality with purposiveness.

While he met this purposiveness at every step, Freud failed to recognise it, and that for two reasons. First because he conceived of psychology, according to the mechanistic materialism of his first masters, as a strictly causal science of nature, like physics, *voraussetzungslos und wertungsfrei*—founded on nothing but strictly verifiable facts and outside any system of values. Then, like all men whose lives have been defined by ruptures, Freud was obsessed by an ill-absorbed past, and penetrated by the certainty that even if God was dead his threats against sinners remained real. Mechanistic determinism satisfied a moral need in him: man, the object of his own past as well as his family's, could never transform himself into the subject of his future.

PSYCHOANALYSIS therefore became a theory of man as guilty for what he does and what he desires, a theory of original sin committed anew by each generation; a mythology of the guilty conscience rather than a psychology of the unconscious. It became, beneath the disguise of a theory of psychic energy, a demonology of the instincts, which play exactly the rôle that the Jewish mystics of the Middle Ages attributed to *Yetzer harah*, the evil urge. (Only the naïve will be surprised by the ease with which religious and secular determinisms can be harmonised. The first starts from the prostration of man, the other ends with it.)

Freud set a part of the Old Testament to psychology as one would set a poem to music. The frightful jealousy of Jahveh is there, and his thirst for vengeance, as well as the guilt of mankind, but the promised great final reconciliation has been eliminated, and replaced by that curse which determines one's destiny in the tragic legends of the Greeks, and which the Christian Church has made, under the name of original sin, the basis and justification of its practical morality.

Thus Freud lent a mechanistic, "scientific" terminology to the age-old propositions of ordinary morality: that one cannot trifle with love, nor, in general, with the instincts, which, driven away, return in redoubled strength; that one pays for everything on earth; that psychic energy is transformed but never lost. He recognised only the familial and reactive man, thus neglecting man in his "sociality" as well as in his solitude; man in creative activity and face to face with death. That is why, after a world war, he explains the existence of modern armies by the libidinous fixation of the soldiers on their

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commander, and the great political movements by the homosexual "component" in their adherents—which, after all, is not much more absurd than explaining the value and effect of a work of art by its author's Oedipus complex.

Later, partly abandoning the pleasure-principle, he returned to the instinct of aggression which Alfred Adler had, since 1908, opposed to the libidinous impulses. It was a question then of understanding, not the murders of which neurotics merely dream, but the real ones whose goal was the extermination of entire peoples. Toward the end of his life the founder of psychoanalysis must have suspected that the language of the family was hardly appropriate to this mass dialogue with death. He seems to have suspected also that anxiety might be something else beside the result of *coitus interruptus* or an expression of guilt. Yet in an interview with Arthur Koestler only a few months before his death, the exiled old man insisted that the crimes of the Nazis were caused by their feeling of guilt. It is almost the same conviction that the Hassidic rabbis of Galicia expounded to their communities in order to make them understand the profound meaning of the massacre of which they were about to be the victims. It is as if the long road of the son of Jacob Freud, the Jew from Buczacz, had been only a circuitous journey home. . . .

Sigmund Freud believed he had freed himself from religion because he had broken with it very early. But a break is not a liberation, it is only a release, and that, moreover, rarely total. Freud is great wherever he destroys, he is almost insignificant when he abandons the posture of opposition. He has the perspicacity of genius when he is attacking the laziness that considers everything it does not understand as nonsense, and he is the victim of a heartbreaking blindness when, ignoring his own "schema of tendentious apperception" (Adler), he reduces the condition of man to the accidents of his instincts, the tragedies of Hamlet and Oedipus to incidents provoked by the incestuous wish, and the tale of the Emperor's new clothes to the exhibitionist impulse.

No doubt in 1885 it was high time for the psychologist to enter the bedroom. But he should not have confused it with the universe. It is true that to create a symbol one must often take the part for the whole but it is never permissible for those who wish to understand the whole to reduce it to one of its parts. Human actions, because they are actions of becoming, are irreducible, their immense variety is not an accident but their way of being, composed as they are of what man finds within himself and the new elements, real or fictive, that he adds.

The great Viennese, Karl Kraus, joked that psychoanalysis was the illness that pretended to be its own cure. He could have added: it is the same with all magic, all religion, all philosophy. And, in a general way, with all intellectual enterprises that seek a definitive and certain truth about Man.

"Man is only disguise, falsehood, and hypocrisy, both in himself and in regard to others," said Pascal—exaggerating because he was just then occupied in saving himself. But it does not much matter how one characterises man, since the true question is to know what he will become: what he will make of himself, into what structure he will order his past, that raw material which conditions but does not determine him. All his secrets, the crucial meanings he gives to his past, are summed up in the image he makes of his future.

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Comment

Dylan Thomas in America

I WAS recently sent John Malcolm Brinnin's book, *Dylan Thomas in America*, for review, but declined, because I do not review books by living authors. Had I undertaken the task I would have been bound to condemn the book in which I recognise two positive values only, the quoted words and judgments of Dylan Thomas himself, and the narration, in the last chapter, of the circumstances which led to his death. Mr. Hilary Corke, in his notice of the book in the May ENCOUNTER, prophesies an endless struggle between future protagonists who will try to interpret his death in their own terms. He rightly emphasises the significance of the subject of their dispute, and the conclusion he draws that this death is a test for every artist's conscience is true indeed. Yet his own verdict is surely the least acceptable of all. To call that death a self-inflicted one by any standards, particularly by moral ones, is to accept the materials of this book as spiritual evidence, the superficial tone in which it is written as a tone of authority, and the calculated observation as a record of insight. Nothing could be more misleading. The tone of the book and its materials betray at once the hallmark of a superficial acquaintance, prime evidence that its author did not know the man.

The true tragedy of Dylan Thomas's death is that he died. Every other consideration is secondary to that. His tours of America may be regarded as a progress towards an inevitable destruction, but that view was contradicted in my experience by his healthy and vigorous appearance when he returned from them. The difference between the last tour and the earlier ones is that when he embarked on it he was already seriously ill. He knew this, and but for his financial straits it is fairly certain that he would not have gone. When it was almost too late, when he was dying, a telephone call was put through to St. Vincent's Hospital from Swansea, giving as much information as possible to assist a diagnosis; it was sent by his friend Daniel Jones, in whose house I waited for a reply. We were told that his life was in the balance. In two days he was dead.

Dylan Thomas spoke of this last tour as a necessity. It was the only one he approached with reluctance. Yet he did look forward, when the period of intensive work in New York would be over, to working with Stravinsky. His intention was to complete the script of *Under Milk Wood*, on which he continued to make revisions, and to handle the performances in New York; and then to go on to Hollywood where he would work with Stravinsky on their projected opera. He was, when he left England, in the position of a man who had several difficult hurdles to negotiate before reaching his objective. Had he been well, he would have done this easily. As it was, he hoped that the short blackouts he had occasionally suffered during the previous months would not recur. The project of the opera filled him with enthusiasm. He had sketched out a plan of the libretto in his mind, and he had the greatest regard for Stravinsky. He knew that he ought to see a doctor, but he feared that the doctor would pronounce him unfit and cancel the trip.

The tragedy of Dylan Thomas's death is made more bitter by the banality of judgment to which it gives rise. Those who were magnetised by his power to entertain became the victims of a mutually enacted delusion. The poet, simple, unaffected, and true, was a person rarely seen by his audience. Their dramatic spotlight at once changed him into what they desired. His stories, his wisecracks they remembered, as who would not? but the surprising consistency of his judgments is one thing they never seem to have observed. In America his audiences recognised the superb reader of poetry certainly, but of the poet himself they knew nothing, or at least that is the impression left by this book. It might almost be said that he was killed by his own mask, by the grimace which his entertainment produced, by a kind of disgust at the popularity of what he was not.

To anyone who grasps this tragedy, whose final scene is horribly accelerated like a nightmare of misinterpretations on many levels, can anything be more cheap, tawdry, and irrelevant than the carefully rendered account of everything the poet ate, or didn't eat, and drank? The poet of apparently destructive force was certainly the most ethical, the most constant of companions. He did not believe there was such a thing as a comfortable conscience. Where he

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found that the people around him were becoming puppets of self-satisfaction he did frequently break up the ground on which they stood. Such moods of violent exasperation coloured the false impression of a romantic poet rather than a true apprehension of the ethical witness. For a witness he always was, and the severest witness of his own behaviour. Yet he was also fundamentally sociable and sympathetic. He tried to adapt his behaviour to his company. Considering each person to be an entire world, he was willing to go a long way with any man in his imagination to explore that world, but a world where Mammon took the place of God never failed to bore and disgust him. His instinct in conversation was to give, and to give prodigiously, and it was also to draw out ideas, to expose fallacies.

During the war, as at any other time, Dylan Thomas expressed his opinions directly and with courage, and he often suffered physical violence for his courage. He knew that human nature would not change and that false values could not be substituted for true ones. The minor quarrels and violence depicted in this book have really no significance, or even interest, compared with the quiet passages when they occur. The real expression of his situation had already been stated in his poems, and its violent climax anticipated:

The voice of children says
From a lost wilderness
There was calm to be done in his safe unrest,
When hindering man hurt
Man, animal, or bird
We hid our fears in that murdering breath,
Silence, silence to do, when earth grew loud
In lairs and asylums of the tremendous shout.

and this:

I know the legend
Of Adam and Eve is never for a second
Silent in my service
Over the dead infants
Over the one
Child who was priest and servants,
Word, singers and tongue
In the cinder of the little skull,
Who was the serpent's
Night fall and the fruit like a sun,
Man and woman undone,
Beginning crumbled back to darkness
Bare as the nurseries
Of the garden of wilderness.

The strictness of Dylan Thomas's poetry in a life of apparent disorder has puzzled many; if the testimony of Brinnin's book were the sole evidence it would seem incomprehensible. The book is, however, a total misrepresentation. It attempts to say everything, and ends by saying nothing, the reason being that Dylan Thomas's actions and words are misunderstood on every page. When he said he was a Puritan he was not believed; but it really was true. Had he followed this statement by saying that before leaving for America on this last tour he had written for a diet-sheet and, though only drinking moderately, had attempted to give up drinking altogether, no one would have believed him. Yet this also was true, though the motive was far from puritanical. He wanted, and needed, his health. He would never have become a teetotaller; he hated all dogma, and that would have been the last for him to accept. But he was not an alcoholic, either. Beer was to him a necessary social medium; spirits were not. The difference between the habitual medium of American hospitality and the medium to which he was chiefly accustomed here undoubtedly hastened his death. The accident that he arrived in America just before his thirty-ninth birthday may have assisted that very instinct of generosity which was to prove fatal to him. Birthdays were always for him occasions for reflection—some of his finest poems were suggested by them—and for unstinted celebration. It would be appropriate, perhaps, for some people to regard his record-breaking bout of spirit-drinking just before his death as a climax, a vindication of art against the world. Yet nothing is further from the truth. Those who treasure such a conception of the artist are likely to misunderstand any artist, but particularly this one. It is their picture that is emasculated, not he; and it is to their picture that he has succumbed. His death is the death they would expect of such an artist, but his death is also, on other terms, his own death; and therein lies the tragedy.

A minor surprise of Brinnin's book is the almost complete absence from its pages of the people about whom Dylan Thomas was most eloquent when he returned from the tours. His enthusiasm for certain poets whose names hardly occur in the narrative had made the tours worth while. Everyone who reads this book should know that at least one other book, even on this subject, has been left out. His widow's introduction is sufficient to put all readers on their guard. The only firm ground I recognise in the book is that upon which actual poems rest; by a feat of apparent magic the titles of the poems he read and loved do not change.

That it is never possible to explain a poet's life is an axiom of the imagination; and it is difficult enough to expound it. Under the most favourable circumstances only a partial exposition may be achieved; how much less, on the slender foundation of a late, business-guided encounter. In this narrative one is aware continually of a deceived photographer necessarily

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preparing the artificial pose. He sells to the world a picture, or pictures, of a person who does not exist.

The poetry of Dylan Thomas and his late prose will remain his best interpreter. To the professional interrogator the task of meeting him involved the removal of many masks. He himself was stubborn, dogged and constant, fiery, combative, full of wonder, self-critical, compassionate, generous, trusting simplicity through every complexity of mind, sociable, delighting in company, absorbed in all the mystery and extension of immediate experience. He was also sardonic and extremely witty, and out of a native honesty drew, at any desired moment, enough extravagance to illustrate his own myth. Even when the myth possessed him he remained true to the values of his imagination. Never having compromised, he had everything to live for when he died.

VERNON WATKINS

Pennard Cliffs
near Swansea, Wales

The Daily Newspaper

I HAVE just read an article on the American press by Mr. Randolph Churchill in the March issue of ENCOUNTER. It was so full of inaccuracies and misinterpretations that I feel that, in the interest of truth, accuracy, and fair play, I must take this opportunity to correct at least a few of them.

Since Mr. Churchill cited circulation figures and advertising *v.* news space in the New York *Times* and the New York *Herald Tribune*, as compared with the London *Times*, to prove his point, I took the trouble to verify the real facts concerning those two leading American dailies. Here is what I found.

1. There is no domestically circulated "special light air edition" of the New York *Times*, as Mr. Churchill implies. All air distribution of the New York *Times* within the United States is of the regular full-size editions. Perhaps Mr. Churchill was referring to the "International Edition" which is an abbreviated edition for foreign distribution only.
2. Secondly, as to circulation figures, Mr. Churchill stated that the New York *Times* has a circulation of 400,000; the actual fact is that the daily circulation for the six months ended September 1955 was 534,376 (this figure is substantially greater at the present time). The circulation of the Sunday edition for the six months ended September 1955 was 1,149,467. He says that the New York *Herald Tribune* sells only 200,000 copies. The actual fact is that for the six months ended September 1955 the New York *Herald Tribune's* circulation was 340,462.
3. The most striking statistical distortion appears in the listing of advertising and news space in New York newspapers compared with London newspapers for a day chosen at random. Mr. Churchill chose for his random date Thursday, December 10th, 1953, which was, for the New York *Times*, the first regular-size issue following the New York newspaper strike. The strike ended on December 8th, and the paper published an emergency edition of sixteen pages on December 9th (126 columns news, 2 columns advertising). The *Herald Tribune* published on December 9th an 88-page paper (24·7 per cent news, 75·3 per cent advertising) because the *Herald Tribune's* situation was different from that of the other New York newspapers inasmuch as its people were not on strike and the paper had on duty a full complement of personnel and was thus able to get into full production immediately. When the *Times* got into full production with the issue of Thursday, December 10th, it did indeed have a 96-page paper with 23·9 per cent of news and 76·1 per cent of advertising. However, it should be immediately discernible that this was by no means a typical day inasmuch as there was an enormous backlog of advertising that it was necessary to accommodate in so far as possible. If it had been mechanically feasible the paper would have printed even more than 96 pages, but this was impossible because towards the end of the week its production facilities are also engaged in setting material for the Sunday edition.

   In any event, if Mr. Churchill had chosen a typical day for his comparison he would have found that the normal proportion is about 40 per cent news and 60 per cent advertising. In the large-size newspapers that the New York *Times* publishes this 40 per cent news content gives readers a substantial volume of information. Actually, non-advertising content on a normal day runs about 180 columns, and when texts of important documents are being published this figure is increased very considerably.

After being appraised of the above facts, I feel that you will agree with me that Mr. Churchill's article painted a picture which, in addition to suffering from inaccuracies and distortions, was decidedly superficial.

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You have my full permission to reprint this letter, as I believe your readers would welcome an opportunity to judge the merits of Mr. Churchill's article on the basis of the true facts.

EDWARD L. BERNAYS

New York 21

MR. RANDOLPH CHURCHILL's "Notes on the Press in Britain and America" (March ENCOUNTER) suggests a few comments which perhaps would alter somewhat the perspective in which he views the American press.

He does not appear to make sufficiently clear the fact that in the United States the publishers of the daily papers also publish the Sunday papers, which are very much larger than the daily editions. The New York *Times* Sunday edition following the strike in December 1953 contained 436 pages. On the other hand, I note that he has chosen a Thursday (December 10th, 1953) for his comparisons, and on Thursdays the papers in the United States tend to be much larger than other weekdays from the inclusion of advertisement for weekend buying. Thus the total size of the daily papers on Thursdays and the proportion of advertisement contained is greater than on other weekdays, especially Saturday.

Sundays of course there is a higher proportion of advertisement. The New York *Times* often has an entire section of advertisement from one store only, such as Macy's, with no news in it at all. The New York *Times* Sunday edition also costs, not five cents, but twenty-five cents, a great deal more than the English Sunday papers.

The mere bulk of the American papers probably tends to limit their circulation to the area of publication. I note the New York *Post*, which costs five cents in New York, costs ten cents outside the city. The publishers are also limited by the fact that out-of-town circulation often is not allowed to swell the rolls on which advertisement fees are based.

However, the columnists which Mr. Churchill mentions and also the news services (AP, UP, INS) help bridge the gap between the metropolitan press and the local papers. If the United States has no truly national press, these services also keep the local press from being quite so local. The position of the local press in the American provinces is often alarming, because the pattern is more and more for the same individuals or company to own both morning and evening papers, together with the combined Sunday edition, and also the local radio and television stations. As the advertisement fees for all are likely to come from the same sources and are the real source of revenue, the large commercial houses are feared to have too great an influence on the press, so much the more since the publishing company itself may be one of them. This situation, the rule rather than the exception in most provincial towns, has led former President Truman to refer to the "kept press and the paid radio."

Finally, Mr. Churchill is quite right in insisting on the difficulty in the United States as in England of interesting local people in world affairs. But is it fair to compare, statistically, the coverage of American news in the British press in the way he does? The *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily Mirror* may both devote a quarter of their foreign news space to America, but there is all the difference between an important bill before Congress and the latest case of adultery in Hollywood.

H. G. HALL

Yale University
New Haven, Conn., U.S.A.

A Genius for Compromise?

MR. HENRY FAIRLIE, in your March issue, seems to be doing some verbal shadow-boxing. He does not like the words "genius for compromise" as a description of the British Way in Politics, and would prefer "synthesis" or "a deposit of acts of policy." It may be questioned whether his chemical metaphor is much more helpful than the "alchemical" one which he dislikes; it seems to mean little more than the "continuity" of policy to which Mr. Roy Jenkins referred in the article which preceded it—the tendency of British governments, with rare exceptions, to leave in general the legislation of their predecessors untouched.

But surely the most characteristic feature of British politics, at least since the end of the Commonwealth, is the ability of one side to give way without carrying resistance to extremity, to know when the ice won't bear. The supreme example of this is of course the 1832 Reform Act; but it was followed by a number of others, of which, on the Labour side, the calling off of the General Strike of 1926 while the ranks were practically unbroken may perhaps be quoted. Owing to the outbreak of war it will never be known whether the Curragh mutiny would have proved an exception; my own feeling is that it would not, that the diehards would eventually have yielded as Lloyd George yielded in 1921. I know of no other exception. It may be incorrect to describe this power to give in against one's own convictions

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rather than fight it out "a genius for compromise"; it seems, however, odd to describe it as "a genius for conflict" unless that term is understood to include a gift for knowing when to run away.

Mr. Fairlie would have been on stronger ground if he had referred to the determined resistance to any sort of compromise—reform put up by governments and legal lights during the 19th century. Recent Parliamentary debates have vividly recalled Romilly and his unavailing struggles to bring a tinge of humanity into the criminal law; the pages of Mr. E. S. Turner's entertaining *Roads to Ruin* provide many other examples of diehard resistance to changes which now seem obvious. Neither noble lords with chimneys to be swept nor shipowners sending coffin-ships to sea had any use for "compromise." Nevertheless, there are in fact many cases in our history of effective "compromise"; and Mr. Fairlie is certainly unfortunate in the examples he selects. Lloyd George's Insurance Act *was* a compromise between the duchesses and the supporters of the Poor Law Minority Report (many more numerous) who wanted a national welfare service financed as is the Health Service today—a compromise which has had a pretty long life. Aneurin Bevan did not hound anybody into anything; he compromised between those who wanted no national health service and those who wanted it staffed by salaried State servants. And if the Education Acts of 1902–3 were not a compromise between warring parties none of whom (except possibly Sidney Webb) got what they really wanted, I do not know what the word means. Compromise, as a matter of fact, has been the basis of a great deal of legislation other than the most fundamental; and indeed it seems possible that as the number of organisations-to-be-consulted proliferates, compromise will become more and more the general rule. Which is, I imagine, the basis of some apprehensions about the party system today.

Of Mr. Fairlie's concluding sentences I can make nothing. Does he really think Lucky Jim is not a member of the "middle class"? Or by "middle class" in his opening paragraph does he really mean "well-educated persons"?

Mr. Jenkins, in trying to prove that moderate parties win elections because of their moderation, produces some very odd history. Whatever Gladstone himself thought in 1885, his party was certainly not moving to the left, except as regards Ireland. It was losing its chief reformer (Chamberlain) to the imperialists: it had practically closed down on social reform and its caucuses were closing the door to working men as candidates. Mr. Jenkins should look less at the Newcastle Programme (carried by Fabian permeation which the Fabians soon saw to have scored but a paper triumph) and more to the Socialism and strikes of the eighties.

As to 1906, the Tories lost for a variety of reasons, of which Tariff Reform and Chinese labour perhaps bulked the largest in electoral propaganda; but the main reason was that the country was sick of them, ripe for change, and that the Liberals had stopped quarrelling, not that Haldane, the friend of Fabianism, had come back to moderate Lloyd George. Who lost an election is as important as who won it. Was Labour in 1931 more "left" than in 1929?

MARGARET COLE

London, N.W.4

I SUPPOSE you to have asked the authors of the two articles on "A Genius for Compromise?" to give you pieces, one on the trees, the other on the wood, of the British two-party system; one on the use to which the system has recently been put, the other on the system of which use has been made. Dovetailed, there are indeed few loose ends.

One, however, sticks out, and that is Mr. Fairlie's desire that the parties should not hide their personalities (is that *quite* what they have?) but should on the contrary become poles round which interests and opinions should group themselves. "The condition of success," he says, referring to the two-party system, "is that the two parties should remain in clear opposition to each other." Certainly this for the most part is true, but it cannot ceaselessly be so. Opposition is not a fact about the Conservative and Labour Parties; nor even about their situation *vis-à-vis* each other, for this is fairly strictly limited; the opposition is between the answers "yes" and "no" which the two parties respectively give to questions as they do or are expected to arise. It is the questions which generate the opposition, and without questions on which true differences exist, the parties will not be able to oppose each other truly or clearly. (Except in terms of "I don't like your face, or your character, or the bottom button of your waistcoat.") Times of doubt and indecision, sometimes dull, sometimes hectic, in British politics have often been those when the parties were undergoing fission, realignment, reallocation of myth and personality (in Mr. Fairlie's terms). From them, the better for metamorphosis, more appropriately equipped parties emerge. One piece of equipment needed at the moment is a new set of clichés for party leaders. The ones now in use are too rusty to pick up the real questions which may quite well be lying around. Underprivileged, vested interests, traditional interests, traditional values, and self-control or self-sacrifice (as used by

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Chancellors) — certainly a good opposition-bearing question lurks under each of these old and ambiguous phrases.

ELIZABETH YOUNG

London, W.2

Politics and Pork-Knockers

MR. MICHAEL SWAN queries the origin of the term "pork-knocker" for a diamond-prospector in British Guiana (April ENCOUNTER). I don't know about the "pork," but "knocker" would appear simply to mean "miner." Thus Halliwell (*Dictionary of Provincial Words*) gives:

> KNOCKINGS. Native lead ore (*Derbyshire*).
> KNOCKSTONE. A stone used for breaking ore upon (*A mining term*).

Roberts (*Cambrian Popular Antiquities*) gives:

> KNOCKERS. A very good-natured, fortunate sort of beings, whose business it is to point out, by a peculiar kind of bumping, a rich vein of metal ore, or any other subterraneous treasure. They are highly respected, and are deemed nearly allied to the fairies.

HILARY CORKE

London, S.W.10

Troubled Dialogue

A FEW random observations occur to me on reading Mr. Amlan Datta's discussion-article in your March issue.

In paragraph four, after the phrase "what Asia lacks in the material sphere," he should have added the words: "and in the spiritual sphere as well." I am, of course, thinking of Asia as it is today and not what it might have been three thousand years ago.

Very possibly every Asian today wants industrial progress at any price, but I am afraid the "sluggish East" still remains so. No one wants to pull up his socks and get down to the task; gross inefficiency, laziness, false excuses, are still the order of the day. Each one thinks to himself that the price, high or low, is to be left to be paid by his neighbour.

As regards the famous "inferiority complex" of the Asian, may it not be that it was this complex, or rather the real inferiority of the East to the West, on the material as well as on the spiritual plane, which invited imperialism?

Finally, Mr. Datta like so many others appears to confuse the two issues, neutrality and neutralism. It may be possible on the grounds of political expediency for some Asian *countries* (but not all) to make out a strong case for neutrality, i.e. non-alignment in case of war, even though one of the parties to the conflict may be a Communist aggressor country; but the attitude of neutral*ism*, that capitalism is as bad as Communism, is indefensible on any ground whatever, whether it be adopted by Asian or European, white or black, Christian or pagan. Those who cry "A plague on both your houses" should trace the quotation to its source, where they will find that the speaker of the line was slain by Tybalt, the aggressor in the quarrel, and not by Romeo.

NARIE OLIAJI

Bombay

Correction

THE following phrase was brought to my notice in the March issue of ENCOUNTER, page 83, that "some enterprising British publisher—he would probably have to be altruistic as well" should bring out *Hofstadter & Metzger: The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States*. May I point out that this book, published by Columbia University Press in the States, is published for them by the Oxford University Press in England and has been available since early in February.

for Geoffrey Cumberlege,
HAROLD L. BEAVER

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BOOKS

The Rock of Eden

THE rich and successful are always with us; but few will deny it is our duty to make them as happy as we can under the circumstances. To be sure, there are limits set by nature that we cannot surpass. When Andrew Carnegie observed that "there is more genuine satisfaction, a truer life . . . in the humble cottages of the poor than in the palaces of the rich," he was merely repeating a cliché upon which all thinking men have, since the beginning of time, been agreed. We cannot, however, leave it at that. Not only do our common human feelings refuse to let us do so; we are under a positive social obligation as well. A land wherein the well-to-do are frustrated and malcontent, where they neither possess pleasure in the present nor perceive hope in the future, is leaving itself open to sedition, commotion, and general social uproar. There is, furthermore, the momentous fact that their numbers are steadily increasing, and it is not inconceivable that in the lifetime of our children there will be a universal depauperisation; one shudders to think of what will be the fate of civil society when this solemn hour strikes.

This social problem, like most others, has been created by the technological advances of the last two centuries, and the accompanying change in people's mode of thought. In earlier times, the spirit of dissent was still-born; one accepted one's position in society, even at the very highest levels, as due to the workings of an ineluctable providence, doubtless benign but always inscrutable—to protest was as unthinkable as it was futile. But then came the first industrial revolution, when humanity drew near, in the words of Mr. Auden, to

> *. . . The Cape Horn of sensible success*
> *Which cries: "This rock is Eden. Shipwreck here."*

And shipwreck they did, in droves. What had previously been ascribed to fate was now discovered to be within the scope of unaided human effort. Money was no longer regarded as something *given*; it was now seen to be something *made*. The rich of all degrees, who had formerly accepted their situation as by divine decree, began to surge restlessly against the conditions of their existence. What is all of 19th century literature but a poignant, uninterrupted protest against the indignity of making money? Even those authors who were of working-class origin identified themselves in imagination with this section of the population whose sufferings seemed so much more real than the petty discomforts of the poor. The consolations of religion—that eternal opium of the wealthy—were no longer available, having been dissipated by the harsh light of rationalism. Between a man and his money there fell no softening shades of tradition, no gentle shadows of other-worldliness. Instead, there was naked confrontation, and to the call of anguished spirit there responded only metallic and mocking echoes.

Even before this grave crisis could be repaired, humanity plunged into the second industrial revolution, as a result of which money is neither given nor made, but simply *happens*. In the consumption-society *à l'Américaine*, which all the world has now sworn to call its own, it is possible to find oneself drawing a fabulous salary by virtue of having been born with an ingratiating smile—or a pleasant wit, or an imposing presence, or a mild talent for inventing jingling couplets. Indeed, one does not need such specific qualities: if people take a liking to you, your fortune is assured. Escape is as nearly impossible as can be. Indignant protest avails not; nor does bold rebellion. The surest way to make a lot of money in America (and everywhere else, shortly) is to write a book or a play in which you denounce your fellow citizens for being as rich and miserable as they are. After all, there is nothing we appreciate more than to see someone else excited about our troubles.

THIS dialectic between money and misery is the subject of Kenneth S. Lynn's shrewd and perceptive *The Dream of Success*.* Mr. Lynn is concerned with the period when money

* *The Dream of Success*. By KENNETH S. LYNN. Constable. 24s.

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(and novels) were still *made*, and the writers he investigates — Dreiser, London, Frank Norris, David Graham Phillips, and Robert Herrick— all earned a considerable dollar-balance by telling the gruesome truth about the horrors of accumulating capital. This chapter of American literature is—and this is Mr. Lynn's main point —a dream within a dream. There is the larger American dream of success from which everyone is fretfully trying to awake; and there is the smaller literary dream of success that participates in the larger dream by exposing it, as a dream. And in reality? In reality, all dreams come true. These novelists, like their protagonists and their readers, made a bundle of money, sought solace in Christian Science and spiritualism, and ended their lives far more wretched than when they entered them.

The America of the second industrial revolution—infinitely richer and more anxious—is the subject of two other recent books, one of them a novel, the other an exercise in very informal sociology. Both of them continue the tradition of the dream within a dream, though as books they—like their protagonists' fortunes—are no longer *made*, but are the sort of things that *happen*, in this case when a man is placed near a typewriter. *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit** is about a "nice American"—a clean-cut, earnest, and blurred cipher of a young man—who has an agreeable job with a charitable foundation at $7,000 a year. His possession of this job, despite his obviously limited intelligence and questionable literacy, surprises neither our author nor our hero: they take it for granted that this is a suitable reward for having been born into the 20th century. As a matter of fact, our hero soon finds himself getting $9,000 a year as assistant to the head of a broadcasting company, a post he obtains by casually applying for it. For most of the book, he is slowly discovering how unhappy he is at being so successful. The novel ends by his chucking it all—but the only visible result of his subversive action is that he inherits a tidy fortune and gets an even nicer job (with no cut in salary): the fact that his new position has to do with the promotion of "mental health" gives us an inkling of where it will all end. And in real life? In real life, *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit* is a best-selling novel which has been made into a movie by Hollywood.

The Exurbanites,† too, has meant money in the bank for its author, which was inevitable under the new iron law of wages. Mr. Spectorsky, a former managing editor of *Living for Young Homemakers*, director of advertising for *Charm*, Associate Eastern Story Editor of Twentieth Century-Fox, and many other such things besides, paints a morbidly fascinating picture of the desperate lives that are led by people who hold jobs of the kind listed above. His "Exurbanites" are the symbol-manipulators of our mass-culture: the advertising men, publishers and editors of slick magazines, songwriters, theatrical producers, television directors, commercial artists, etc., who live in the posh areas beyond the suburbs of New York. They make between $20,000 and $50,000 a year; are in perpetual debt to the psychoanalyst and the corner grocer; drink too much; have ulcers, heart trouble, and high blood-pressure; are harassed by their wives, children, and friends; and are on the whole living arguments for Rousseau's thesis about the deleterious effects of civilisation. They also play an important rôle as the consumers of American culture, in which capacity they buy books like *The Exurbanites*, and go to see plays like *Death of a Salesman* or movies like *Executive Suite*. For relaxation, they write novels more or less like *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit*.

All this is what one would expect. But there are certain aspects of *The Exurbanites* which are genuinely disturbing, for they suggest that the age-old misery of the well-to-do has reached a point where it is becoming absolutely unbearable, and that it might in the not too distant future erupt into open class warfare. There is, for instance, the memorandum supposed to have been written by members of the staff of NBC Television, on "How To Sell a Second-Hand Pencil Which Has Lost Its Eraser" (*"Fabricated from the finest second-growth hickory, it is graphite-filled with fine-grained, jet-black carbon. . . . Oven-baked enamel coating, with die-stamped copper blue markings. Octagonal contours slip easily into any size hand. Tipped with cold-rolled forged steel collar. . . . Removal of eraser guarantees pencil to be 100% latex-free!"*) which, in its disgust for the *status quo*, is almost apocalyptic. And, even more frightening, there is the Exurbanite parlour-game described by Mr. Spectorsky as follows:

> *One of the group is selected to be It. It is told to leave the room, and that while It is out of the room the others will make up a story of some sort. Then it will be It's task to return and try to discover what the story is about by asking of everyone in turn whatever questions occur to It. The other people are restricted, in their answers, to a Yes, a No, and a Maybe. Once It is out of the room, the others will make up no story whatsoever. They*

**The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit*. By SLOAN WILSON. Cassell. 12s. 6d.

†*The Exurbanites*. By A. C. SPECTORSKY. J. B. Lippincott (Philadelphia). $3.95.

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will use up a little time to fill their drinks, tell a joke or two at It's expense, and remind any squares who don't know how the game is played (if indeed there is any square present aside from It) the real rules. The real rules are that when It returns, any question asked that ends with a consonant is answered with a No; any question that ends with a vowel is answered with a Yes; a question ending with a "y" permits the answer Maybe. The point of the game is that It will make up his own story, and in the process disclose to the psychoanalysts present, by his free-association, his unconscious fantasies.

That the fantasies thus elaborated may range from the murderous to the necrophilic is less alarming than the invention of the game itself. Should the misery of this class ever break completely through the bonds of custom that now restrain it, one's imagination boggles at what it will be capable of.

What is to be done? In view of the rate at which wealth is multiplying, there appears to be no likely solution in the sphere of economics, barring a cataclysmic act of God on which it would be folly to rely. Nor is there anything to be expected from old-fashioned preaching and sermonising: the New Testament today would be just another best-seller. The only hope would seem to lie with the saving remnant of the poor. Can they so far forget their class-consciousness as to relinquish to the rich some of that joy and sweetness which, under present circumstances, only the poor can afford? Such a measure will call for a generosity and far-sightedness that no privileged class in history has hitherto shown. But nothing less will save the day.

Irving Kristol

INFORMATION AND STATEMENT

IF A poem is not a statement *as well*, it is not a poem. The statement may be about anything—the infidelity of women, a tram-ride to Kentish Town, the nature of love, a friend's escape from drowning, the difference between Europe and America, an old man in a park, or a hangover. But it must be a statement, not conveyed information. Information *describes* what is known or what is known to be known. A statement *utters* (and hence creates) what is known and also what is not known to be known. Without a personal vision, by which I mean an individual apprehension of the existence of a creating god, you cannot make a statement. *Therefore*, without a personal vision, you cannot be a poet. (That is why poets are said to be born and not made, a truth professional critics of the newer sort tend, by the nature of things, to overlook.) And just as the adjective is the enemy of the noun, information is the enemy of the statement. That is to say, even when information is necessary to the statement (as it often is, in the same way an adjective may be necessary to a noun) it is an impediment. Hence information is the enemy of the poem.

I make the above remarks not to define poetry but to chip off some incrustations attached to the word. For, since poetry is a much, much rarer phenomenon than might be imagined when one considers the hundreds and hundreds of books of verse that are turned out every year, there is not unnaturally a tendency to permit that term to embrace any prosodic writing which is a little better than the general run. And this must serve to explain beforehand why some of the following observations about individual books of poetry may appear not to err on the side of generosity.

To begin with Mr. Alberto de Lacerda*: I don't know any Portuguese and I am quite aware that verses in a Romance language one doesn't understand generally sound bewitching, even when commonplace or bad. (In parenthesis I offer the notion that there is so much ready-made poesy in the diction, cadence, and habit of some Romance languages that it must by now be hard to write poetry in them. The Irish likewise are in the same dilemma or something near it: for, born with Celtic gab and blarney, they all obtain so melodious an ease in handling English, that only with the utmost difficulty does an Irishman produce a poem instead of a bit of poesy. One might compare the earlier and the later poems of Yeats with this idea in mind. At any rate, of living Irish poets the best is Patrick Kavanagh, the acerbity of whose writing contrasts with the woolly melopœiac fluidity of most of his countrymen's.) To get back to my

* *77 Poems*. By ALBERTO DE LACERDA. Translated by Alberto de Lacerda and Arthur Waley. Allen and Unwin. 9s. 6d.

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muttons: Mr. Alberto de Lacerda, who was born in Mozambique twenty-eight years ago, is a Portuguese and by my guess a very good poet. In the book I have before me his poems are printed with English translations by Mr. Arthur Waley, with the active collaboration of the poet, on facing pages. The Portuguese verses seem full of transparent and subtle rhythms, but I may be wrong there. (The English translations on the other hand are often jerky.) But what I do take notice of is that their imagery, while perhaps a wee romantic, works, lives, and is relevant; that the poems aren't cluttered up with obstacles (*information*: description of scenery, cultural asides, etcetera, that have nothing to do with what the poems are *saying*.) Mr. Lacerda cuts his very beautiful cackle to come to the pegasuses. Each of his lyrics is a statement almost unimpeded with adjectives. They offer no description and accord no information beyond what concerns those states and powers for which we have the poet's word.

So many poets he loved, so many poems
So often set him afire!
But in the poems he wrote
Monumental even when brief
Sings a passion only of his own
That chisels with flame the night of the ages
With that perfect voice which awakens
The remorse of men, the love of the gods.

To give an idea of the cadence of the original, here are the last two lines:

com aquela voz perfeita que disperta
o remorso dos homens e o amor dos deuses.

But the translation seems heavy-footed on occasions—especially in this version of a lovely couplet:

morta quando as asas protectoras
o velho berço, ainda, acalentavam.

Dead when the protective wings still used to warm
The old cradle.

In the following translation the word "ignore" is used (Mr. Waley notes) not in its current sense "take no notice of" but in its earlier: "not to know."

THE POETS AND THE LOVERS

They ignore and know. They are the wina
That guides down the real ways.
Redeemers of the gods in men
There they are—
The solemn fury of the nights which dawn
The tears ignored by our eyes,
The sweetness of shores that continue,
Keeping on the sand, for a while,
Human footprints.

TURNING from Mr. de Lacerda to the poems of Mr. Randall Jarrell,* one is immediately struck by the defensive self-consciousness of the American. This is not meant to be a criticism of Mr. Jarrell but of the kind of world he lives in (and we also) where it is really a little odd to sit down to write a poem. There is thus a sort of uncertain defiance in Mr. Jarrell's poetry, as in so much contemporary verse: the poems wear a chip on the shoulder: "Look! I'm a poem!" Because of this they every now and again forget their function (which is to make statements) and tell us the Latin name of a flower or about the good books they've read lately, and other odd bits of unwanted (because unnecessary to the statement) information. Let me illustrate what I mean from a characteristic poem, "Prisoners."

Within the wires of the post, unloading the cans of garbage,
The three in soiled blue denim (the white P *on their backs*
Sending its chilly North *six yards to the turning blackened*
Sights of the cradled rifle, to the eyes of the yawning guard)
Go on all day being punished, go on all month, all year
Loading, unloading; give their child's, beast's sigh—of despair,
Of endurance and of existence; look unexpectingly
At the big guard, dark in his khaki, at the dust of the blazing plain,
At the running or crawling soldiers in their soiled and shapeless green.
The prisoners, the guard, the soldiers—they are all, in their way, being trained.
From these moments, repeated forever, our own new world will be made.

Everything here earns its place with the exception of the two-and-a-half lines which even Mr. Jarrell put into brackets. These give a camera shot of the scene of the poem (and, like a photograph, emphasise the irrelevant with the relevant) but add nothing to the poem itself, in fact they finally distract attention from what is being said. For the scene does not need to be established any further than has been done elsewhere in the verses. And that is the main criticism I have to make of many of Mr. Jarrell's poems—there's too much extraneous matter, information, and padding one way and another. It is for such reasons and prejudices I am a lukewarm admirer of Mr. Jarrell's best-known piece, "A Girl in a Library," an excellent bit of writing but one

* *Selected Poems*. By RANDALL JARRELL. Faber and Faber. 15s.

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belonging to the genus Short Story. Which reminds me to note that the ironic, gentle, cultivated and witty mind displayed in Mr. Jarrell's novel, *Pictures from an Institution*, is clearly exhibited by the poems collated here; e.g. the epigram "A War."

There set out, slowly, for a Different World
At four, on different mornings, different legs . . .
You can't break eggs without making an omelette
—That's what they tell the eggs.

But I would have preferred to quote a few of the longer, successful poems, such as "The Island" (a queer one). Most of all I wish Mr. Jarrell's more recent, pared, and assured work (some of which has appeared in ENCOUNTER) had been included in this selection.

THE Poetry Society has had the sense to make Edwin Muir's new volume* their Spring Choice. But it made one of its odder recommendations with *Poems*† by G. J. Warnock (Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford) from which I cull, fairly or unfairly:

The dancers' stamp and clamour
Sounds bravely on the deck
But loud like waves that hammer
Listing liners into wreck—
If love will not be pliant
You should laugh and look defiant
But my love's grown a giant
With his dagger at my neck.

If this sort of thing is really worth recommending, why not *Poems*‡ by another Oxford man, the late E. A. Parker, where one may find Edwardian but at least less pointless strumming:

Lost in a dream-world all his own
See where this dreamer walks alone.
By strange, wild paths he loves to stray
The scorner of our common way.
And ever in his lying dream
Sun, moon and stars bow down to him.
He is our father's dearest son.
Come, let us kill him and have done.

Or why either of them? But let us return to Mr. Muir.

"Edwin Muir," says Mr. J. C. Hall in his useful British Council pamphlet§ about the poet, "is by general consent one of the most distinguished poets writing in English today. I say by general consent, yet it is only in quite recent years that this recognition has come to him." Mr. Hall goes on to offer a number of good reasons why, so late in the day, Edwin Muir's poetry should suddenly be well thought of; indeed, *pace* Mr. Hall, come within danger of being overvalued. However, it is the simplest reason which Mr. Hall omits: and that is, there are not a lot of people around who write as well as Mr. Muir. So it is not surprising—or is it?—that some should have at length begun to notice the fact. Indeed Mr. Muir's new collection, *One Foot in Eden*, is as good a book of verse, if not the best, that he has yet brought out. The poems are generally softly meditative, and as the title hints, the theme of many is the fall of man.

Innocent, knowing nothing of innocence,
We learned it from the sad memorial name
First uttered by the offence.

But there are a number of finely polished verses (e.g. "Telemachus Remembers") hung from classical pegs. Some, indeed, like the lyric "Orpheus' Dream," have for me a little too glabrous a finish. To me the music of this particular poem has the accumulated self-cancelling sweetness of syrup spread on honeycomb:

Forgiveness, truth, atonement, all
Our love at once—till we could dare
At last to turn our heads and see
The poor ghost of Eurydice
Still sitting in her silver chair
Alone in Hades' empty hall.

Bravo! But such lines really appertain to Yeats, to whose ghost Mr. Muir ought properly return them. Now, paying Mr. Muir—if he will forgive the presumption—the compliment of criticising his work by the highest standards, I am bound to make some general animadversions. (1) His imagery is generally beautiful but dead: that is to say, suppose he introduces a lion, he treats it as if it were a heraldic animal—its mythic or symbolic value ossifying the live brute. (2) What vitiates much of his poetry is its general solemnity, which in turn fathers dullness. Great poetry has always the element of gaiety about it (as Yeats said, "Hamlet and Lear are gay"). (3) On the whole Mr. Muir's verse (as in the poem "The Difficult Land") has the distinction of good prose—which is enough of itself to raise it well above the ruck—but only occasionally that dionysiac lift, the touch of Munchausen pulling himself out of the bog by his own hair, that turns good verse into great poetry. As Mr. Muir himself says:

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* *One Foot in Eden*. By EDWIN MUIR. Faber and Faber. 10s. 6d.

† *Poems*. By G. J. WARNOCK. Blackwell. 3s. 6d.

‡ *Poems*. By E. A. PARKER. Blackwell. 4s. 6d.

§ *Edwin Muir*. By J. C. HALL. British Council Pamphlets (published by Longmans). 2s.

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There is no trust but in the miracle.

TO WIND up, I should like to mention the annual Fantasy Press anthology of Oxford poetry.* Usually there is nothing glummer than collections of undergraduate verse, but for the past year or two—movements or no—the losers of the Boat Race have been producing a series of exceptionally good undergraduate anthologies. Not only do some of the poems, but the typography and design, deserve praise. As far as the 1955 collection goes, I put my money on Messrs. John Creagh, Adrian Mitchell, and Quentin Stevenson, but don't claim not to have missed any darker horses.

David Wright

* *Oxford Poetry 1955*. Edited by ADRIAN MITCHELL and RICHARD SELIG. Fantasy Press. 5s.

CONSCIENTIOUS VIOLENCE

THE only thoroughly unsatisfactory scene in the length and breadth of Jane Austen is that in *Persuasion* in which Louisa falls off the Cobb at Rye. For this once and once only all the authoress's customary balance and irony, her blessed freedom from the contemporary sensational and sentimental, desert her:

> *There was no wound, no blood, no visible bruise; but her eyes were closed, she breathed not, her face was like death. The horror of that moment to all who stood around! . . . while Captain Wentworth, staggering against the wall for his support, exclaimed in the bitterest agony,—*
>
> *"Oh God! her father and mother!"*

"She breathed not," indeed! It is almost a couple of pages before Miss Austen recovers her form with "the workmen and boatmen about the Cobb . . . collected near them, to be useful if wanted; at any rate to enjoy the sight of a dead young lady."

It is not, of course, the violence in itself that invalidates this scene for the modern reader—far from it; but the fact that violence is outside the scope of Miss Austen. It is the perfect example of the dangers to a writer of overstepping the limits of his private experience, imaginative or physical. It is further an example which, even in its particular form, remains perfectly relevant. Miss Austen, it is customary to remark, lived in shelter and retirement; the world is supposed to have grown more obstreperous since then; the newspapers are rich in pogroms abroad and acid-bath murders at home, and the modern reader expects to find these features of the outer world reflected in his fiction. And the novelist attempts to gratify him. Yet the fact of the matter is, that violence is still usually just as foreign to the individual English writer's experience as it was to Jane Austen's—luckily for us. On the level of imaginative experience Mr. E. M. Forster lives at ease with sudden explosions of brutality, barbarity, or blind Fate, and Miss Compton-Burnett with will-fiddling, defective bridges, and slow poisoning; but the average writer only too obviously turns with (perhaps unconscious) relief from his episodes of conscientious violence to the tea-table and bedroom equivocations that are his proper *métier*.

Miss Iris Murdoch, for instance, who occupies a nicely got-up little philosophical mews (or muse) just off the Amis Rd., has chosen in her second novel, *The Flight from the Enchanter*,* to present a *jeune ingénue* semi-heroine, Annette, who has her blouse ripped off and breasts exposed, is it three, four, five times?—I forget: at any rate, a highbrow Jane (*not* Miss Austen). This is only the beginning of it: Rosa, the other semi-heroine, a *pas jeune désabusée*, is the mistress of two Polish refugee brothers who enjoy her night and night about, in the presence of their antique bed-ridden mother; agents rush in with photo-flashes to record this process; there is a suicide by window, a suicide *manqué* by milk of magnesia; the principal character, Mischa Fox, about whom the others revolve as round a mysterious and withdrawn centre, has the very heart of his being eaten away with some spiritual acid, leaving only a shell of cruelty, sentimentality, and childishness. "Lust and rage, lust and rage, Miss Keepe," as Mrs. Wingfield, a brilliantly drawn old lady eccentric, is fond of remarking to Rosa.

Miss Murdoch is not at all a realistic writer; her books veer continually in and out of fantasy,

* *The Flight from the Enchanter*. By IRIS MURDOCH. Chatto and Windus. 15s.

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nightmare, or incredible farce. *Under the Net* became unbelievable in a Marx-brotherish sort of way, with film-sets and giant alsatians; but *The Flight from the Enchanter* takes its firmest leave of reality precisely in its central material, its *raison d'être*—the identification of cruelty and compassion, the attempt to penetrate an area of the human beyond either. Judged as novel, these thematic portions of the book cannot be said to succeed: the matter is out of control, the philosophical idea has not been digested into realistic and significant action: it is the peripheral stuff, the account of how power-mad secretaries take over a government department, the delineation of the splendid Mrs. Wingfield, that alone qualifies as successful in the text-book sense.

Yet I do not think we can quite leave it there; text-books are guides, not passports. Miss Murdoch may be at present an imperfect writer, but she is a potentially powerful one; even the least realised portions of *The Flight from the Enchanter* leave one with a haunted unease, a sense of infamous possibilities. Above all, I should not wish to give the impression that this new novel is in any way a disappointment after the promise of her first. If less ostensibly a "success," it is also far more ambitious, and ambitious in just the right sort of way.

The Manikin,* by Ralph Ricketts, is a success story in which Eugene Merrall, the manikin of the title, escapes from middle-class plus pretensions (as represented by his rather Way-of-All-Flesh-ly uncle and guardian, the Canon) by way of a number of false starts to fame and position of a sort that it would not become the reviewer to reveal—suffice it to say that the achievement is empty and the number of other persons gored or trampled in the process considerable.

In its general outlines, of course, this novel has already been written a large number of times by a sufficient variety of people (as, I dare say, has every other novel): the plot so obviously appeals to the God-Almighty in every author, who is thus enabled to sit back in his little bed-sitter exposing the hollownesses of wealth, fame, ambition, and beauty, and dancing his puppet to his strings. The result is usually perfunctory, lifeless, and mechanical; the hero lacks autonomy and the moral is stale, flat, and unprofitable. Mr. Ricketts has avoided these pitfalls by making Eugene very much less of a manikin than might have been supposed: certainly he is overriding and self-centred; but he has very real talent, he has great courage (redeeming virtue of the blackest Jacobean villain) and a fierce and fastidious

* *The Manikin*. By Ralph Ricketts. Faber and Faber. 15s.

Memoirs of a great Socialist

Beatrice Webb's Diaries 1924 - 1932

Edited and with an Introduction by

MARGARET I. COLE

This significant and long-awaited volume of Beatrice Webb's diaries covers a period of vital transition in her attitude to the Soviet Union, and of unprecedented development and turmoil in the Labour Party.

Sidney Webb was President of the Board of Trade in the Labour Government of 1924, and Beatrice was at the very centre of things as his wife and hostess—and in her own right. Now that almost all the members of that Cabinet are dead, leaving little in the way of published accounts behind them, Beatrice Webb's *Diaries* provide the most intimate and valuable commentary in existence on the personalities and events of the episode. The same is true, to a lesser degree, of her description of Ramsay MacDonald's second essay in government. In between, we have her impressions of the General Strike, the miners' strike, and other events.

There are, too, penetrating studies, made at close range, of the political personalities of the time. Indeed, these diaries give the reader a new, realistic picture of the Labour Party and its leaders at a time when some of British Socialism's greatest intellects were most active.

Illustrated. 25s *net.*

LONGMANS

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independence of spirit. He desires less to possess than to excel. Indeed there are two ambitions, the one of greed and the other of pride, and they are so different that it is a mere folly of language that spreads the same word over the two of them; it is the ambition of pride that Eugene possesses, and it is less a vice than the last infirmity but one of noble minds. So we see him at the same time ruthless and incorruptible: it is his fastidiousness, implacability, and lack of common humanity that leads him, when the wife of his first employer attempts to seduce him, to flick his cigarette ash down her corsage by way of reply; but there is equally not the slightest question of his accepting the plump cheque the husband offers him to hush the matter up subsequently—nor for that matter of his making it public in the first place.

This is an assured and "grown-up" book by a writer who falls into the same class as Anthony Powell and L. P. Hartley. It is not perhaps quite even. Any novel of this sort must give pictures of an ascending scale of social classes; and a somewhat slow and unconvincing start in seaside boarding-houses, coupled with the sudden access of precision and authenticity the moment Eugene penetrates the Debrett barrier, show where Mr. Rickett's own experiences lie—it is at any rate a pleasant change from the more usual and directly opposite state of affairs (Dickens's kack-hand with the gentlefolk, for instance). And again the sudden violence of the closing pages, though it is well done, struck me as contrived and unnecessary; as violence came in, so authority and truth went out. But these are only minor criticisms of a welcome book from a writer who has been far too long silent.

Freighter,* by Susan Yorke, is about a group of people travelling, by what we would call cargo-boat, from the States to Europe. During the course of the voyage the doubts and difficulties with which they severally started, are resolved. That sort of book. The principal character is an ex-concert pianist who has had his fingers smashed; he comes to realise that he can substitute for his loss by becoming a composer instead of an executant. Just like that.

This seems to me an extreme example of that sort of American product in which superficial gloss, "art," sophistication, and pretension overlay an essential vulgarity, crudity, superstition, and insensitivity—a veneer of "civilisation" behind which lie all those qualities that make the noble savage ig. Miss Yorke is superstitious in the directest sense: into an ostensibly realistic novel she introduces an infallible clairvoyante without qualifications or apology—or the awareness of the need for either. As for vulgarity—

> *He hated highbrow women, perhaps because he was no longer highbrow himself. If he hadn't smashed his hands he would most certainly have become one of the foremost concert pianists of his time, and if he'd done that, there wouldn't have been a woman in the world highbrow enough for him.*

Honours candidates in analytics, induce six entirely distinct bogus and unpleasant false axioms from the foregoing statement. Do not drive your pen through the paper.

I hasten to add that Miss Yorke's previous novel, Miss Nancy Spain described as: "not only the best first novel I have read in years. It is the best novel." So now you know exactly where you are.

MR. JEROME WEIDMAN'S *Your Daughter Iris** is in the form of a series of letters to her mother back home from a young American wife on her first trip to England, or apparently to anywhere else for that matter. Designed to cement English-speaking unity by poking gentle-to-feeble fun all round. The trouble about the epistolary method at this date and age is that only the witlessly garrulous now commit themselves to letters of the requisite length and circumstantiality. Mr. Weidman, having very properly grasped this point, may be felt to have applied it somewhat too rigidly: Iris really is a consummate little ass. Those who admire the pert, brash, hick, and ignorant, may find her charming. This book is, at any rate, the lightest of the light and utterly harmless.

WITH Manès Sperber's *The Lost Bay*,† we come at last to violence necessary and legitimate. The hero of this book, which is about resistance movements in Yugoslavia and Poland, is one Doino Faber, first an anti-Hitler Communist, then, after the Moscow trials, an anti-Stalin ex-Communist—typical history of the European political intellectual in the thirties, and approximating closely to that of M. Sperber himself. The movements in which he or his friends take part are doomed and chaotic—they are predominantly anti-political political and they fail because seeking justice rather than power: that in Yugoslavia, for instance, is ground between the quisling Ustachis on the one hand and the Tito partisans on the other; and the Michaelovitch

* *Freighter*. By SUSAN YORKE. Macdonald. 12s. 6d.

* *Your Daughter Iris*. By JEROME WEIDMAN. Jonathan Cape. 15s.

† *The Lost Bay*. By MANÈS SPERBER. André Deutsch. 15s.

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Chetniks on the third hand, and their own internal dissensions on the fourth, not to mention each man's own divided soul and loyalties. Chaotic in matter, *The Lost Bay* is also forbidding in manner: "Not the style of a cow chewing a cud: no external details, no descriptions of gestures or faces. For readers who find the essential sufficient. High time I refused to accost my readers in the whorish way that is expected of writers," remarks a character of his own work, and M. Sperber is of the same opinion. But perhaps the muse of fiction is a little tartier than he takes her for.

This is a fine, a noble book in many ways, but a difficult one, especially for the English reader: it is the incredible good luck of his historic accident that makes unreal for him mass exterminations, barbaric anarchy, and the cancerous tumours of despair; that surprises him to find characters identified by their politics first, by the colour of their hair second or never. At the very end of this book (which itself closes a trilogy) M. Sperber goes finally beyond politics and a man once more becomes more important than his party—the humanist position is after all affirmed. If again this may ring curiously in English ears, like the tortured recantations by others of faiths to which we ourselves have never been seriously tempted to subscribe; if we have to look to non-English writers to provide us with models of legitimate violence in fiction: that again is a measure of our fortune.

Hilary Corke

WHEN EUROPE TREMBLED

IN THE era of concentration camps and of Hiroshima we are too strenuously engaged in reassessing the limitations of ethical humanism against the re-emergence of original sin to be unduly morally disturbed by natural disasters. We are satisfied with scientific explanations as far as we comprehend them and, for the rest, assuage our distress with relief funds and charities. Floods, earthquakes, and tornadoes provide if anything a happy demonstration of human benevolence to a civilisation increasingly afraid of human malignity. Even the Tokyo-Yokohama earthquake of 1923 which killed one hundred thousand people caused no great heart-searching to a world perplexed by the moral significance of the awful casualty lists of World War One. A more devastating earthquake today would not distract men's consciences from the problems posed by Belsen, Siberia, and Nagasaki. The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 shattered contemporary ethical optimism as completely as Hitler, Stalin, and the hydrogen bomb have destroyed the more facile views of human progress.

Sir Thomas Kendrick's admirable account* of the earthquake and its effects on Europe is primarily concerned with the ethical problems it raised and the various answers that were given. There had been an earthquake in Jamaica in 1692 and one in Peru in 1746. On the whole these places were distant enough from civilised Europe to be ignored. How little prepared for natural cataclysms the morale of the early 18th century was, however, is shown by the strong theological reaction in England to the slight earth tremors of 1750. The reaction was purely local but none the less indignant—

> Jamaica shou'd be shook! a land
> Like Sodom, all impure!

Or again—

> That earthquakes rock Italic Ground
> Scarce strikes us with Amaze!

But now Britain herself was involved and she reacted strongly. The whole of Europe was to react to the news of five years later, for Lisbon was a prosperous city of wide renown and the devastation was great—too great for the optimism of the age to stand up against. Of course, for the "enthusiastic" of all sects the answer was comparatively easy. The earthquake with its ten thousand or so victims was a direct sign of the Wrath of God. That Lisbon should have been chosen was perhaps easier for Protestants or Jansenists to explain: God was declaring his abomination of the Inquisition or of the Jesuits. They were not slow to express this opinion with a certain self-righteousness. For pious Catholics the problem was a little more difficult. Lisbon, though prosperous, mercantile, possibly a little cosmopolitan, was neither a home of heresy nor like Paris a city of marked iniquity. The disaster, too, occurred on All Saints' Day when Mass was being celebrated and a considerable number of religious were among the victims.

* *The Lisbon Earthquake*. By T. D. KENDRICK. Methuen. 21s.

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Nevertheless, Catholic writers, on the whole, accepted the disaster as a sign and a call to repentance. If there were vast numbers of innocents who were killed, this was the least of worries, for they would be saved, and who knew into what sin they might have fallen had they survived. As for those who were struck down heavy with guilt, it was they after all who had been the cause of God's wrath. One writer, whom Sir Thomas includes in his fascinating survey of the earthquake literature, even assured the people of Lisbon through the mouth of Jesus that they had been especially favoured by being the direct recipients of God's wrath.

For moderate opinion—and the educated of mid-18th century Europe were essentially of moderate opinion—the problem was a more difficult one. The popular version of Leibniz, the sort of views put forward by Pope in "The Essay on Man," held that the Universe was ordered by God for the best ends. Evils did occur inexplicable perhaps to men, but they all worked towards a total good. In a world created by an omnipotent, benevolent deity it was evident that good far outweighed evil. The Lisbon earthquake was not easy to fit into this scheme of things. Many attempts were, of course, made, but they all were clearly marked with indecent complacency and unsatisfactory casuistry. Whatever they were, they were blasted to pieces by two works of Voltaire—*Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne* and *Candide*. Voltaire's profound distress at the cruel event and his even greater disgust at the complacent attempts to accept it led him if not into a free-thinking view—free-thinkers were a rarer 18th century phenomenon than is popularly supposed—at any rate into a very deep pessimism. It was only from his considerable concern not to shock decent opinion that he was prepared even to maintain the hope that for Man one day "*tout sera bien.*" The view that "*tout est bien*" he rejected with scorn. Candide's famous closing remark leaves only the most limited field of hope for man in a world of encompassing evil.

PURELY scientific opinion was heard but little and its seismic knowledge was shaky. Nevertheless Pombal, the future dictator, did all he could to encourage purely natural explanations. If, as a man of action, he was deeply concerned with neither the moral nor the scientific aspect of the disaster, he could not but attempt severely to suppress the apocalyptic preachings of the more fanatical Jesuits. Mass repentance would not help him to get the rubble cleared, yet mass repentance was the only logical answer to the Wrath of God.

Sir Thomas reasonably finds in the stoic pessimism of Voltaire and the statesmanlike practicality of Pombal the two most admirable reactions to the earthquake. I cannot help thinking, however, that there is a certain contradiction involved in this view. The clue, perhaps, lies in Rousseau's reaction to Voltaire's views. He wrote in protest at Voltaire's pessimism, for him the benevolence of God's scheme was untouched by the event. If men had not built cities like Lisbon this would not have occurred. The simple shepherd, the savage still received in full the benefits of the divine ordering of Nature. In some degree, it seems to me, Voltaire and Rousseau were not so far apart: Candide's cultivating his own garden and Rousseau's shepherd are near kin. Neither fits very well with the ambitious organising power of Pombal. The truth surely is that pessimistic acceptance demands extraordinary moral energy if it is not to fall into quietism. Some measure of illusion seems to be needed by man. Seen in this light the philosophical optimism concerning the natural order which Voltaire rightly castigated is very understandable. Indeed until the 18th century few men, pagan or Christian, had accepted a Universe where evil exceeded good. If they did so, they fell into a more difficult extreme, as the Manichæans' mass suicide or the Christian Scientists' denial of material reality show. After the Lisbon earthquake and Vol-

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taire's *Candide*, men began rapidly to replace the benevolence of Providence with the perfectibility of Man. Today we are facing another earthquake aftermath of hopes.

This slight dissension from Sir Thomas's views, however, is only a measure of the extreme interest of his book. This picture of the moral climate of two hundred years ago is as sympathetic as it is clear. The author, too, writes with wit, but without any of that easy irony at the expense of the views of the dead which might so easily have marred his story.

Angus Wilson

A FAR-OFF GERMANY

THE criticism of fiction is curiously out of step with that of the other arts. Twenty or thirty years ago experiment in this field was received with encouragement and respect, but today well-tried method is more likely to earn acclaim. The change has come gradually but lately. When he first read James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Desmond MacCarthy wrote that this was dynamite placed under the modern novel. So it seemed to most bookish people then, but they were quite wrong. Perhaps the explosive in Joyce's bomb was defective, or perhaps the brutal destruction it wreaked prompted an impulse to rebuild in its old shape what had been there before, but, however it may have been, critical opinion of fiction today, in strong contrast with its neighbours and its former self, likes familiar things best; likes good, "sound," set pieces, with well-detailed background, plenty of light and shade, easily recognised postures, perspective and moulding according to the rules, and a clearly expressed and not too unexpected (of course not hackneyed) subject. A critic of painting would be bold or facetious were he to recommend living painters to model themselves more closely on Landseer and Gilbert, but not very long ago one of the younger and cockier pontiffs of letters suggested to modern practitioners that they should nestle closer under the mantle of Sir Walter Scott; and he could do this without raising a smile that I know of (except my own). Twenty or thirty years ago the extraordinary book under review* would have been the subject of much analysis and excitement; would have stood in serious danger of overpraise. At the moment of writing it has received, (so far as I know), only two reviews which indicate that here is something out of, and greatly superior to the ordinary run of novels. It has only had one first-class notice. For the rest it has had to be content with faint and cursory praise in the fiction-bins. Though by the time this appears it may have been wholly rescued, let me row out, nevertheless, in my slow boat, and let me rejoice if, when I arrive, all is well with this finely built vessel.

A Legacy appears to be only the second book written by Sybille Bedford, her first being a record of a Mexican journey. The evidence is that this is her first novel. If so, she is a writer of extraordinary power. Her book is unconventional, bold, experimental, not always easy to follow, and unmistakably sincere in spite of some eccentricity. It has considerable faults and is probably not a masterpiece for that reason, but it is written with genius. By that I do not mean that it is as good as Shakespeare, but that it is manifestly written throughout from a deep inner impulse. The reader never doubts that the observation is the result of firmly grasped experience. A more practised hand at novel-writing would have arranged some of the experience in a way which made it accessible to more readers, for sometimes quite simple events require concentrated study of Miss Bedford's prose before they become clear; but no novelist could convey with more decisiveness a "vision" of how life moves in certain conditions.

THE theme of *A Legacy* is the retribution of fate: that things bad begun make themselves good by ill. The legacy which burdens the two related families of the chief persons of the drama (that is, the chief persons of the first part, for the emphasis changes) is a crime committed in partial guilt against a young man, one of their number, who, in the first part of the book, is sent to a German military academy where ill-treatment drives him out of his mind. The boy runs away, the authorities demand his return, and though the elder generation of the two families do not wish to return him, they acquiesce, his father through neurotic exasperation,

* *A Legacy*. By SYBILLE BEDFORD. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 12s. 6d.

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the head of the related family through fear of jeopardising a first-rate political career. Or so it seems, but in fact an act of mean cowardice, which remains hidden until the end, was what really decided the fate of the wretched youth. The latter never recovers his sanity, and vanishes from the story for more than a hundred and fifty pages. Here many critics might be inclined to censure the book's construction on the ground that so long an absence must kill interest. It is largely a question of confidence in the author. I had plenty in Miss Bedford by the time poor young Johannes had vanished, and I found his return not a moment too late or unprepared. The climax and end of the story is Johannes' death by violence forty years after; the tremendous national scandal which follows his killing, and a suicide on discovery of where the real responsibility lies for his madness, the narrator's mother, (who has taken over as principal halfway through), fleeing from her husband and the last scenes because she cannot face further embroilment.

Such is the main subject of this book. The story depends on the place and time where it happens, the first years of the German Empire, of Bismarck's old age, and Kaiser Wilhelm II. The book can be thought of as a study of Wilhelmine Germany but only in the sense that this kind of story could only credibly have occurred in front of that background. One of the most interesting technical achievements in the book is the presentation of the background by indirect method. There are some admirable passages in which the narrator generalises on the nature of the different Germanies and the meaning of the Bismarck age in Prussia, but these are not essentials of the story which could survive their elimination (with loss). Though the author can paint scenes in memorable colours, she gives us very little description of the sights and smells and dress of that victorious and enslaved Hohenzollern Reich. The *Sieges Allee* is the only architectural feature of Berlin of which she gives us a glimpse. There is only one sword, one white tunic, one high collar (supporting a pasty face), and only about three helmets. The look of the countryside in Germany, and later in Spain and France, is largely left to the imagination. This rigid economy pays. As in the novels of Miss Compton-Burnett, whose influence is apparent in some passages, the outer world, during most of the book, is recognisable through the adventures of small family circles. A whole past age comes alive with them, and we feel, with astonishing force, the impact of cold, Spartan, Protestant, neurotic Prussia on a Catholic society in cosy and equally neurotic Baden. Only in the lurid climax of the story, when Johannes's death starts anti-militarist disorders throughout the Empire in favour of the poor lunatic's murderer, does the author take us a little into the general scene.

THE Feldens and Bernins, the two upper-class "country families" of Baden, whose usual language, marvellously well caught by Miss Bedford, is French of a sort, (the sort in which a trout was usually "*une forelle*"), are contrasted with a rich bourgeois family of Berlin Jews, the Merz family. The second major episode in the book is the marriage of Julius von Felden to Melanie Merz. On hearing of the engagement, Julius's elder brother Gustavus covers his face with his hands and after moaning "Nineteen generations of recorded alliances . . ." recites in a low mutter a string of knightly orders. But thereafter we hear nothing more of the expected family fracas. It is perhaps suggested that Gustavus's wife Clara (*née* Bernin) prevents the expected class-explosion by deflecting concern to the religious aspect of the case, but the reader cannot be sure. I think he ought to be. Although this is perhaps the most amusing part of the book, I think it is the least satisfactory. The touch is less certain than in the first or later parts, and the reason, I believe, is largely because the humour gets out of hand. There is an indefensible intrusion by monkeys. Julius von Felden keeps two chimpanzees which get him into a great deal of comic trouble from which he cannot extricate himself because he loves his pets as children. They are very funny monkeys, but by being allowed to run wild over Miss Bedford's pages, they wreak damage not only in but on her story; they make Julius into such a total zany that we never take him seriously again, and yet we must believe that he can fascinate four women, that he is a chief source of the information from which the story is written, and that he plays somewhat of a grave part in its beginning and end.

Led on by the chimpanzees, farce becomes dangerously established in other episodes of the comedy. There is a hilarious moment when Melanie, determined to marry Julius in spite of Jewish family prejudice, obtains baptism in secret, but she makes a bosh shot and is received into the Protestant not the Catholic fold by an oversight. When Clara Felden reads the Pastor's certificate she collapses on the floor. It is wildly funny, but what we are not told is that Melanie's mistake would have been a natural one in those days. Jewish conversions to Christianity were very common in 19th century Germany, and a source of much worry to orthodox Jewish believers, but a great distinction was made between going over to Bible-loving Protestantism and going over to Catholicism which, ever since the days of the Holy Alliance and the revived anti-

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Jewish code in Austria, was regarded as Israel's implacable enemy. Melanie's mistake belongs to the order of pathetic comedy not farce, but no reader who has not studied Jewish history is likely to guess this. And anyway the monkeys have put us in the wrong frame of mind for grave reflections.

What saves this part of the book, I believe, is the gradual emergence, to a dominant position in the story, of Sarah Merz, Melanie's sister-in-law. The book lacks nothing in skilfully drawn portraits: the old Merz couple with their loyalty and coarseness and continual interest in rich food, their Jeevesian butler Gottlieb, the French dressmaker Jeanne settled in Berlin, and Eduard Merz the spendthrift, but none is better than Sarah. She is Eduard's wife and in her we find one of the most interesting of all Miss Bedford's people, a rich, gifted, masterly woman, disappointed in life and love, who seeks consolation through power: through managing other people and making a name for herself as an art collector. In the fashion of the time she makes a religion of art, and there is a fine scene when the devout Clara and the art-worshipping Sarah meet in head-on collision over a Pissarro. "Is that how you see it?" cries Sarah, "all of it? Illusion. You may be right; for me it is *this* that can make a farmyard real." "Surely not," says Clara, looking again. "Oh, I cannot believe that. This is a *harmless* painting." Sarah takes over from Clara as the main person, and when poor little Melanie dies it is Sarah who contrives, though unwillingly, Julius's second marriage to a ravishing young English girl, Caroline Trafford. The latter then proceeds to take over the central position in the book from Sarah. She dominates the third and best part of the story, some of which is told by her in the first person. She has married the zany Julius because she cannot marry a learned man, Francis, whom she loves. The zany seems indifferent to the position which he understands from the beginning. There is an interesting struggle of personalities which is reflected in the balance of the book. Sarah wants to keep Caroline in a subordinate position to herself, but Caroline has strength and fire and can be mastered by no one, least of all by Count Bernin when he tries to persuade her slightly to misrepresent the suicide to Clara at the very end. Throughout the Johannes scandal, Caroline has shown herself a loyal wife to Julius, but Bernin's proposal, mild as it is, acts as the last straw, and she decides she can stand no more Baden family life. It is now that she flees to England. In spite of her very late appearance she comes as near as anyone to being the heroine of this strangely constructed novel.

WHAT is one to make of it? Miss Bedford seems to work under many influences, many of them wide apart. One can be reminded of Henry James, Meredith, Mr. Evelyn Waugh, and (in the gastronomic passages) of Mr. Cyril Connolly, all within a few pages. I have mentioned an apparent debt to Miss Compton-Burnett. The influences may be other than the ones I suppose (the best detectives can go wrong here), but whatever the influences are, they have not proved too much for Miss Bedford's sturdy talent. There is lawful enrichment, no imitation. But that does not mean she has absorbed different influences into a single style of her own; she uses more than one voice. If the book has a serious and essential fault it is the lack of flow which comes from the lack of a master-mood. Yet this failing leaves a great virtue the more evident. The untidiness is not the untidiness of indiscriminate note-taking, but of a perplexingly clear reflection of the motley colouring of life. There is an authenticity about this story which is something more than the authenticity of the one acceptable autobiographical novel which is said to reside in every one of us. It is rather the illusion of reality which comes from devoted toil at things understood.

Christopher Sykes

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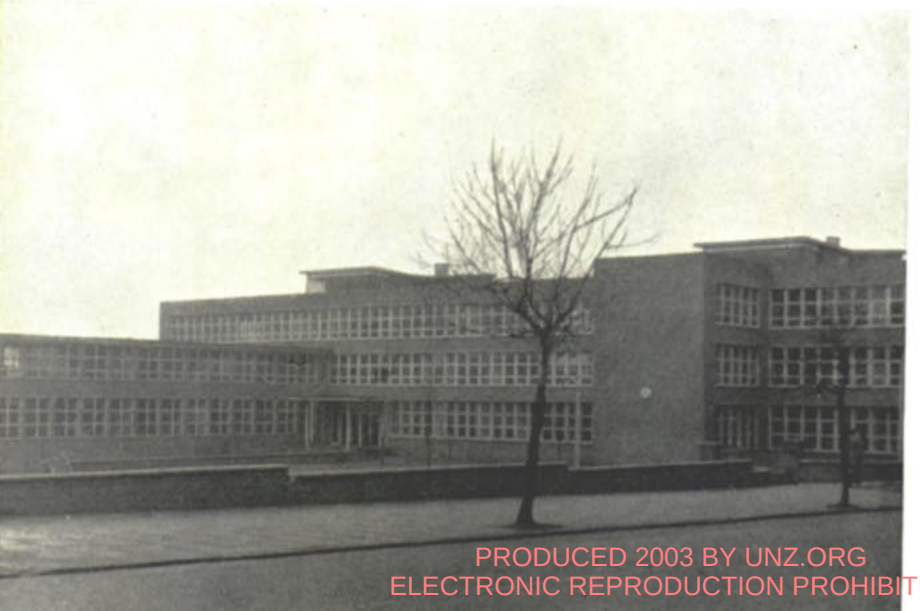

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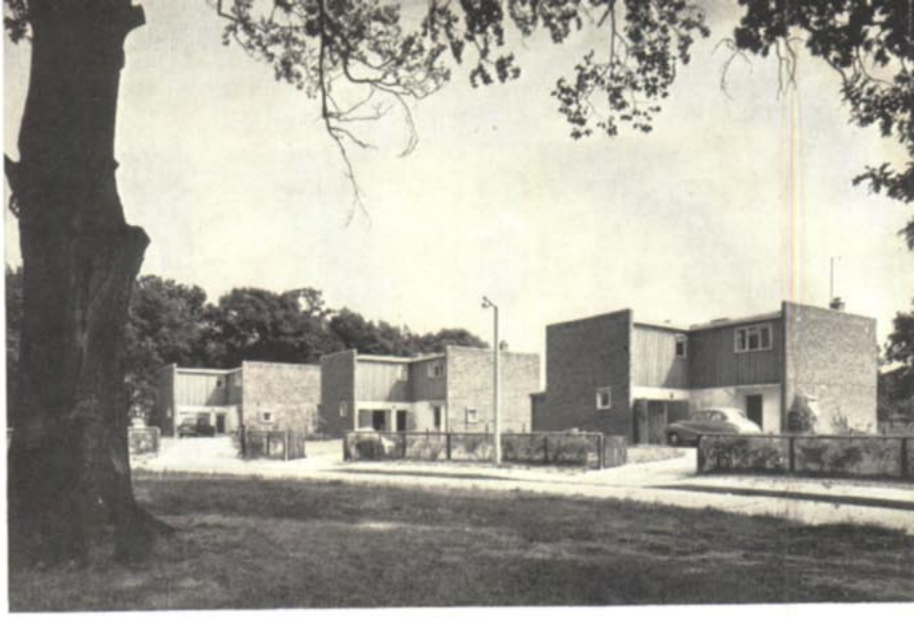

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